THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HALL, A.M.

VOL. I.

BRIEF MEMOIR BY DR. GREGORY.

ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER AND WRITINGS, BY JOHN FOSTER.

MEMOIR, LETTERS, AND CIRCULAR LETTERS.

Painted by N. C. Branwhite. Engraved by J. Archer.

Robert Hall

THE

WORKS

OF

ROBERT HALL, A.M.

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

BY

OLINTHUS GREGORY, LL.D., F.R A.S.

AND

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER AND WRITINGS,

BY JOHN FOSTER,

AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS ON DECISION OF CHARACTER," ETC.

VOL. I.

MEMOIR, LETTERS, AND CIRCULAR LETTERS.

LONDON:

HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

M.DCCC.XLVI.

LONDON:

J. HADDON, PRINTER, CASTLE STREET, FINSBURY.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

Page.

A Brief Memoir of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M., by Dr. Gregory 1

Appendix.

Note A.—Miscellaneous Gleanings from Mr. Hall's Conversational Remarks . . . 159
B.—Quotations from the Writings of Sir James Mackintosh and Dr. Parr . . . 178
C.—Character of Mr. Hall as a Preacher. By Mr. John Scott . . . 186
D.—Extract of a Letter from Dr. Prichard . . 190
E.—Sketches of Mr. Hall's Character especially in Private Life 191

Observations on Mr. Hall's Character as a Preacher. By John Foster 201

Letter to the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society 256
Note.—Serampore Missionaries.—Letter of Mr. Foster to Dr. Gregory 259

LETTERS.

I. To the Baptist Church, Broadmead, Bristol . 265
II. To the Rev. Isaiah Birt, Plymouth . . 266
III. Accepting the Pastoral Charge of the Baptist Church at Cambridge . . . 268

Page.

IV. To Miss Wilkins, afterwards Mrs. Fysh, of Camberwell 268

V. To Mrs. Fysh, of Camberwell, on the death of her Sister, Mrs. Parsons . . . 271

VI. To the Rev. James Phillips, Haverfordwest . 273

VII. To the Rev. James Phillips . . . 275

VIII. To the Rev. James Phillips . . . 277

IX. To Mrs. Tucker, Plymouth Dock . . 279

X. To Mrs. Tucker 281

XI. To Mr. Hewitt Fysh, Camberwell, on the Death of Mrs. Fysh 282

XII. To Dr. Gregory.—Origin and Object of the Eclectic Review 285

XIII. To William Hollick, Esq. of Whittlesford, near Cambridge.—On his own recovery from a severe Malady . . . ib.

XIV To Dr. Gregory.—On the Certainty attending Religious Knowledge . 287

XV. To William Hollick, Esq.—On his Recovery from a second Attack 289

XVI. To the Rev. James Phillips . . . 291

XVII. To the Church of Christ, of the Baptist Persuasion, in Cambridge.—On resigning the Pastoral Charge 292

XVIII. The Baptist Church at Cambridge to the Rev. Robert Hall.—In Reply to the preceding . 293

XIX. To Mr. Newton Bosworth, Cambridge . . 295

XX. To the Rev. James Phillips . . . 297

XXI. To the Rev. Dr. Cox . . . 299

XXII. To the Rev. Dr. Ryland . . 300

XXIII. To the Rev. James Phillips . . 302

XXIV. To a Friend in Perplexity as to his Religious State ib.

XXV. To the same 304

XXVI. To the Rev. James Phillips . . . 305

XXVII. To Ebenezer Foster, Esq., Cambridge . . 307

XXVIII. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . 308

XXIX. To William Hollick, Esq.—On the Death of Mrs. Hollick 309

Page.

XXX. To R. Foster, jun., Esq., Cambridge . . 311

XXXI. To Joseph Gutteridge, Esq., Denmark Hill, Camberwell 312

XXXII. From Mr. Gutteridge to Mr. Hall.—Proposing that he should preach a Series of Lectures in London . . . . . *ib.*

XXXIII. To Joseph Gutteridge, Esq.—In reply to the preceding 314

XXXIV. To Joseph Gutteridge, Esq.—On the same Subject 316

XXXV. To the Rev. James Phillips . . . 317

XXXVI. Extract of a Letter to Mrs. Angas, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 319

XXXVII. To Mr. Newton Bosworth, Cambridge . . 320

XXXVIII. To my young Friends of Mr. Edmonds's Congregation 321

XXXIX. Extract from a Letter to the Rev. W. Button . 322

XL. To the Rev. James Phillips, Clapham.—On Occasion of the Death of his own Son . 323

XLI. To the Rev. W. Button . . . 324

XLII. To the Rev. Dr. Fletcher, of Blackburn, now of Stepney 325

XLIII. To the Rev. Dr. Fletcher . . . 326

XLIV. To Dr. Ryland 328

XLV. To Mr. Josiah Conder . . . 329

XLVI. To the Rev. W. Chaplin, Bishop Stortford . 330

XLVII. To Dr. Ryland 332

XLVIII. Extract from a Letter to the Rev. W. Button . 333

XLIX. To the Rev. Thomas Grinfield, Clifton . *ib.*

L. To Dr. Ryland.—On Public Missionary Meetings 334

LI. To Dr. Ryland 336

LII. To Dr. Ryland.—(Extract.) . . . 337

LIII. To the Rev. James Phillips . . *ib.*

LIV. To Dr. Gregory, on the death of Mr. Boswell Brandon Beddome 339

LV. To the Rev. Thomas Langdon, Leeds . . 340

LVI. To Dr. Ryland . . . 342

A BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

THE REV. ROBERT HALL, A. M.

BY OLINTHUS GREGORY, LL.D.

A BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

THE REV. ROBERT HALL, A. M.

Robert Hall, whose Works are collected in the volumes now published, was born at Arnsby, a village about eight miles from Leicester, on the 2d of May, 1764. His father was descended from a respectable family of yeomanry in Northumberland, whence he removed to Arnsby in 1753, on being chosen the pastor of a Baptist congregation in that place. He was not a man of learning, but a man of correct judgement and solid piety, an eloquent and successful preacher of the gospel, and one of the first among the modern Baptists in our villages who aimed to bring them down from the heights of ultra-Calvinism to those views of religious truth which are sound, devotional, and practical. He was the author of several useful publications, of which one, the "Help to Zion's Travellers," has gone through several editions, and is still much and beneficially read, on account of its tendency to remove various frequently-urged objections against some momentous points of evangelical truth. He was often appointed to draw up the "Circular Letters" from the ministers and messengers of the Northampton Association. One of these letters, published in 1776, presents, in small compass, so able a defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, that it might be advantageously republished for more general circulation. This excellent man died in March, 1791. His character has been beautifully sketched by his son, who, in one sentence, while portraying his father, with equal accuracy

depicted himself:—"He appeared to the greatest advan-"tage upon subjects where the faculties of most men "fail them; for the natural element of his mind was "greatness."

The wife of this valuable individual was a woman of sterling sense and distinguished piety. She died in December, 1776.

Robert was the youngest of fourteen children, six of whom survived their parents. Four of these were daughters, of whom three are still living; the other son, John, settled as a farmer at Arnsby, and died in 1806.

Robert, while an infant, was so delicate and feeble, that it was scarcely expected he would reach maturity. Until he was two years of age he could neither walk nor talk. He was carried about in the arms of a nurse, who was kept for him alone, and who was directed to take him close after the plough in the field, and at other times to the sheep-pen, from a persuasion, very prevalent in the midland counties, that the exhalations from newly ploughed land, and from sheep in the fold, are salubrious and strengthening. Adjacent to his father's dwelling house was a burial ground; and the nurse, a woman of integrity and intelligence, judging from his actions that he was desirous to learn the meaning of the inscriptions on the grave-stones, and of the various figures carved upon them, managed, by the aid of those inscriptions, to teach him the letters of the alphabet, then to group them into syllables and words, and thus, at length, to read and speak. No sooner was his tongue loosed by this unusual but efficient process, than his advance became constantly marked. Having acquired the ability to speak, his constitutional ardour at once appeared. He was incessantly asking questions, and became a great and a *rapid* talker. One day, when he was about three years old, on his expressing his disapprobation of some person who spoke quickly, his mother reminded him that *he* spoke very fast. "*No*," said he, "*I only keep at it.*"

Like many others who were born in villages, he received his first regular instructions (after he left his nurse's arms) at a dame's school. Dame *Scotton* had the

honour of being his first professional instructor. From her he was transferred to a Mrs. *Lyley*, in the same village. While under their care he evinced an extraordinary thirst for knowledge, and became a collector of books. In the summer season, after the school hours were over, he would put his richly prized library, among which was an Entick's Dictionary, into his pinafore, steal into the grave yard, (which, from an early and fixed association, he regarded as his study,) lie down upon the grass, spread his books around him, and there remain until the deepening shades of evening compelled him to retire into the house.

At about six years of age he was placed, as a day-scholar, under the charge of a Mr. *Simmons*, of Wigston, a village about four miles from Arnsby. At first, he walked to school in the mornings and home again in the evenings. But the severe pain in his back, from which he suffered so much through life, had even then begun to distress him; so that he was often obliged to lie down upon the road, and sometimes his brother John and his other school-fellows carried him, in turn, he repaying them during their labour by relating some amusing story, or detailing some of the interesting results of his reading. On his father's ascertaining his inability to walk so far daily, he took lodgings for him and his brother at the house of a friend in the village: after this arrangement was made they went to Wigston on the Monday mornings, and returned to Arnsby on the Saturday afternoons.

The course of instruction at Mr. Simmons's school was not very extensive: and Robert was not likely to restrict himself, as a student, to its limits. On starting from home on the Monday, it was his practice to take with him two or three books from his father's library, that he might read them in the intervals between the school hours. The books he selected were not those of mere amusement, but such as required deep and serious thought. The works of Jonathan Edwards, for example, were among his favourites; and it is an ascertained fact, that before he was nine years of age, he had perused and reperused, with intense interest, the treatises of that pro-

found and extraordinary thinker, on the "Affections," and on the "Will." About the same time, also, he read "Butler's Analogy" with considerable avidity. He used to ascribe his early predilection for this class of studies, in great measure, to his intimate association, in mere childhood, with a tailor, one of his father's congregation, a very shrewd, well-informed man, and an acute metaphysician. Before he was ten years old, he had written many essays, principally on religious subjects; and often invited his brother and sisters to hear him preach. About this time, too, in one of those anticipatory distributions of a father's property, which, I apprehend, are not unusual with boys, he proposed that his brother should have the cows, sheep, and pigs, on their father's death, and leave him "all the books."

He remained at Mr. Simmons's school until he was eleven years of age, when this conscientious master informed the father that he was quite unable to keep pace with his pupil, declaring that he had been often obliged to sit up all night to prepare the lessons for the morning; a practice he could no longer continue, and must therefore relinquish his favourite scholar.

The proofs of extraordinary talent and devotional feeling, which Robert had now for some time exhibited, not only gratified his excellent parents, but seemed to mark the expediency and propriety of devoting him to the sacred office; but the delicate health of his son, and the narrow means of the father, occasioned some perplexity. Mr. Hall, therefore, took his son to Kettering, in order that he might avail himself of the advice of an influential and valued friend residing there, Mr. Beeby Wallis. Their interview soon led to the choice of a suitable boarding school; but the pallid and sickly appearance of the boy exciting Mr. Wallis's sympathy, he prevailed upon his father to leave him at his house for a few weeks, in the hope that change of air would improve his health. This gentleman was so greatly astonished at the precocity of talent of his youthful visitor, that he several times requested him to deliver a short address to a select auditory invited for the purpose. He often

afterwards adverted to the injury that he suffered from this incongruous elevation. "Mr. Wallis," said he, "was "one whom every body loved. He belonged to a family "in which probity, candour, and benevolence, consti-"tuted the general likeness: but conceive, Sir, if you "can, the egregious impropriety of setting a boy of eleven "to preach to a company of grave gentlemen, full half "of whom wore wigs. I never call the circumstance to "mind but with grief at the vanity it inspired; nor, "when I think of such mistakes of good men, am I "inclined to question the correctness of Baxter's lan-"guage, strong as it is, where he says, 'Nor should men "turn preachers as the river Nilus breeds frogs (saith "Herodotus), when one half *moveth* before the other is "*made*, and while it is yet *but plain mud!*'"*

Robert's health appearing much improved from his short residence at Kettering, he was placed by his father as a boarder, at the school of the Rev. *John Ryland*, in the neighbouring town of Northampton. Mr. Ryland was a very extraordinary man, whose excellencies and eccentricities were strangely balanced. In him were blended the ardour and vehemence of Whitfield, with the intrepidity of Luther. His pulpit oratory was of the boldest character, and singularly impressive, when he did not overstep the proprieties of the ministerial function. In his school he was both loved and feared; his prevailing kindness and benevolence exciting affection, while his stern determination to *do* what was right, as well as to *require* what he *thought* right, too often kept alive among his pupils a sentiment of apprehension and alarm. So far as I can learn, from several who had been under his care, he taught Greek better than Latin, and the rudiments of mathematical science with more success than those of grammar and the languages. His pupils never forgot his manner of explaining the doctrine and application of ratios and proportions; and they who had ever formed a part of his "living orrery," by which he incorporated the elements of the solar system among the amusements of the play-

* Saint's Rest, Preface to Part II. original edition.

ground, obtained a knowledge of that class of facts which they seldom, if ever, lost. They were strenuously encouraged to engage in the several athletic exercises in which school-boys delight. These seem, in a degree, to have improved the constitution of the subject of this narrative. He gave himself to them most heartily; and it was uniformly found that in those which required a strong effort for a short time, he was the most successful: thus, when he contended with the swiftest runners, though they got in advance of him on level ground, he was always *first* when they ran up a hill.

Our youthful student remained under Mr. Ryland's care but little more than a year and a half; during which, however, according to his father's testimony, "he made great progress in Latin and Greek;" while, in his own judgement, the principle of emulation was called into full activity, the habit of composition was brought into useful exercise, the leading principles of abstract science were collected, and a thirst for knowledge of every kind acquired. It should also be mentioned here, that it was during the time Robert was Mr. Ryland's pupil, that he heard a sermon preached at Northampton, by Mr. *Robins*, of Daventry, whose religious instruction, conveyed "in language of the most classic purity," at once "impressive and delightful," excited his early relish for chaste and elegant composition.*

From the time he quitted Northampton until he entered the "Bristol Education Society," or academy, for the instruction of young men preparing for the ministerial office among the Baptists, he studied divinity, and some collateral subjects, principally under the guidance of his father, with occasional hints from his acute metaphysical friend, still residing in the same village. It is recorded in the "Church Book" that in "1778, On "Lord's day, Aug. 23d, Robert Hall, youngest son of our "pastor, Robert Hall, gave a very distinct account of his "being the subject of special grace. He was but four-"teen years of age last May; has appeared to be serious "from his early childhood. He was baptized on Lord's

* See the Memoir of Mr. Tolles, in a subsequent volume.

" day, Sept. 6th, and the same day was added to the " church."

Having thus given satisfactory proofs of his piety, and evinced a strong predilection for the pastoral office, he was placed at the Bristol Institution, upon Dr. Ward's foundation, in October, 1778, being then in his fifteenth year. He remained there until the autumn of 1781, when the president of the institution reported to the general meeting of subscribers and friends, that " two " pupils, Messrs. Stennett and Hall, had been continued " upon Dr. Ward's exhibition, but were now preparing " to set out for Scotland, according to the Doctor's will."

The Bristol Academy, when Mr. Hall first joined it, was under the superintendence of the Rev. Hugh Evans, who was shortly afterwards succeeded by his son, Dr. *Caleb Evans*, both as president of the institution, and as pastor of the Baptist church in Broadmead. The Rev. *James Newton* was the classical tutor. Under these able men he pursued his studies with great ardour and perseverance. He became an early riser; and it was remarked in consequence, that he was often ready to attend the tutor for the morning lessons, before some of his fellow-students had commenced their preparation.

His sentiments at this time respecting his theological tutor, and the importance of his studies in general, may be gathered from the subjoined extracts from two letters to his father, both written before July 1780.

" Dr. Evans is a most amiable person in every respect: as a man, generous and open-hearted; as a christian, lively and spiritual; as a preacher, pathetic and fervent; and as a tutor, gentle, meek, and condescending. I can truly say that he has, on all occasions, behaved to me with the tenderness and affection of a parent, whom I am bound by the most endearing ties to hold in everlasting honour and esteem.

" Through the goodness of God, of whom in all things I desire to be continually mindful, my pursuits of knowledge afford me increasing pleasure, and lay open fresh sources of improvement and entertainment. That branch of wisdom in which, above all others, I wish and crave your assistance is *divinity*, of all others the most interesting and important.

It is the height of my ambition, that in some happy period of my life, my lot may be cast near you, when I may have the unspeakable pleasure of consulting, on different subjects, you, whose judgment I esteem not less than an oracle.

"We, poor, short-sighted creatures, are ready to apprehend that we know all things, before we know anything; whereas it is a great part of knowledge to know that we know nothing. Could we behold the vast depths of unfathomed science, or glance into the dark recesses of hidden knowledge, we should be ready to tremble at the precipice, and cry out—'Who is sufficient for these things?'"

The system of instruction at Bristol, comprehended not merely the learned languages and the rudiments of science, but a specific course of preparation for the ministerial office, including the habit of public speaking. Essays and theses on appropriate topics, were written under the direction of the tutors: religious exercises were carefully attended to; and the students were appointed, in turn, to speak or preach upon subjects selected by the president. Among the books first put into Mr. Hall's hands to prepare him for these exercises, was Gibbons's Rhetoric, which he read with the utmost avidity, and often mentioned in after life, as rekindling the emotion excited by Mr. Robins's preaching, improving his sensibility to the utility as well as beauty of fine writing, and creating an intense solicitude to acquire an elegant as well as a perspicuous style. He was, therefore, more diligent in this department of academical labour than many of his fellow-students. Usually, however, after his written compositions had answered the purpose for which they were prepared, he made no effort to preserve them; but either carelessly threw them aside, or gave them to such of his associates as expressed any desire to possess them. Some of these early productions are still extant; but the only one which I have been able to obtain is an essay on "Ambition," in which there is more of the tumultuary flourish of the mere orator, than he would ever have approved after he reached his twentieth year. Nor was it correct in sentiment. The sole species of excellence recommended to be pursued was superiority of intellect; all moral qualities, as well as

actions, directed to the promotion of human welfare, being entirely overlooked.

Indeed there is reason to apprehend that at this period of his life, Mr. Hall, notwithstanding the correctness and excellence of his general principles, and the regularity of his devotional habits, had set too high an estimate on merely intellectual attainments, and valued himself, not more perhaps than was natural to youth, yet too much, on the extent of his mental possessions. No wonder, then, that he should experience salutary mortification. And thus it happened. On one of the occasions when he was appointed, agreeably to the arrangement already mentioned, to deliver an address in the vestry of Broadmead meeting-house, the passage selected for him by the tutor, was 1 Tim. iv. 10:—" Therefore, we both labour " and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, " who is the Saviour of all men; specially of those " who believe." After proceeding, for a short time, much to the gratification of his auditory, he suddenly paused, covered his face with his hands, exclaimed, " Oh! I " have lost all my ideas," and sat down, his hands still hiding his face. The failure, however, painful as it was to his tutors, and humiliating to himself, was such as rather augmented than diminished their persuasion of what he could accomplish, if he once acquired self-possession. He was, therefore, appointed to speak again, on the same subject, at the same place, the ensuing week. This second attempt was accompanied by a second failure, still more painful to witness, and still more grievous to bear. He hastened from the vestry, and on retiring to his room, exclaimed, " If *this* does not humble me, the " devil *must* have me!" Such was the result of one of the early efforts of him whose humility afterwards became as conspicuous as his talents, and who, for nearly half a century, excited universal attention and admiration by the splendour of his pulpit eloquence.

Our student spent the first summer vacation after his entering the Bristol institution, under the paternal roof at Arnsby; and, in the course of that residence at home, accompanied his father to some public religious services

at Clipstone, a village in Northamptonshire. Mr. Hall, senior, and Mr. Beddome, of Bourton, well known by his Hymns, and his truly valuable Sermons, were both engaged to preach. But, the latter, being much struck with the appearance, and some of the remarks, of the son of his friend, was exceedingly anxious that *he* should preach in the evening, and proposed to relinquish his own engagement, rather than be disappointed. To this injudicious proposal, after resisting every importunity for some time, he at length yielded; and entered the pulpit to address an auditory of *ministers*, many of whom he had been accustomed from his infancy to regard with the utmost reverence. He selected for his text, 1 John i. 5, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" and it is affirmed, treated this mysterious and awful subject with such metaphysical acumen, and drew from it such an impressive application, as excited the deepest interest.

On the arrival of the summer vacation, in 1780, he again visited Arnsby; and during the period he then remained at home, his father became fully satisfied that his piety was genuine, as well as that his qualifications for the office of a preacher were of a high order. He therefore expressed to many of his friends his desire that he should be "set apart to the sacred work." Yet solicitous not to be led aside from a correct judgement by the partiality of a father, he resolved that the church over which he was pastor, should judge of his son's fitness, and recognise their conviction by a solemn act. The members of the church, after cautious and deliberate inquiry, ratified the decision of the anxious parent, and earnestly and unanimously requested "that "Robert Hall, jun., might be set apart to public em-"ploy."

"Accordingly," as the following extract from 'the Church-book' testifies, on the 13th of August, 1780, "he was examined by his father before the church, "respecting his inclination, motives, and end, in refer-"ence to the ministry, and was likewise desired to "make a declaration of his religious sentiments. All "which being done to the entire satisfaction of the

" church,* they therefore set him apart by lifting up their " right hands, and by solemn prayer.

" His father then delivered a discourse to him from " 2 Tim. ii. 1. ' *Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the* " *grace that is in Christ Jesus.*' Being thus sent forth, " he preached in the afternoon from 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. " ' *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his* " *mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them*

* As the words *church, deacon,* &c. when used by congregational dissenters, whether baptist, or pædobaptist, are employed in senses differing from what are current among episcopalians, I annex this brief note to prevent misconception.

Among the orthodox dissenters of the class just specified, a distinction is always made between a church and a congregation. A *congregation* includes the whole of an assembly collected in one place of worship, and may therefore comprehend not merely real christians, but nominal christians, and it may be, unbelievers, who, from various motives, often attend public worship. The *church* is constituted of that portion of these, who, after cautious investigation, are believed, in the exercise of judgement and charity, to be real christians. It is regarded as the duty of such to unite themselves in fellowship with a church, and conform to its rules; and the admission is by the suffrage of the members of the respective *church;* its connected congregation having no voice in this matter. A christian church is regarded as a voluntary society, into which the members are incorporated under the authority of Christ, whose laws they engage to obey, for the important purposes of promoting the mutual improvement of those who compose it, by an orderly discharge of religious duties, and of bringing others to the knowledge of the truth. Every such church of Christ is considered as an independent society, having a right to enjoy its own sentiments, to choose its own officers, maintain its own discipline, admit members, or expel them on persisting in conduct unworthy of the christian profession; without being controlled or called to an account by any others whatever.

Such a church, as a christian community, observes the Sacrament, or " Communion of the body and blood of Christ," at stated seasons; the members of other churches being admissible, with the consent of the members present, on any specific occasion.

The officers of such a church consist of bishops or presbyters (i. e. pastors) and deacons. The latter are not, as in the church of England, and among other episcopalians, an order of the clergy, but are *laymen.* They are chosen from among the members of the church, and their business is " to see that the table of the Lord, the table of the poor, and the table of the minister be supplied." They attend to the secular concerns of the church, as a body, and to all that relates to the convenience of the society, in reference to their public meeting. In many societies, too, they assist the pastor in his general superintendence. They usually trace their institution, as, indeed, do the episcopalians, but both, in my judgement, fallaciously, from Acts vi. 1—6. I suspect that neither deacons among episcopalians, nor those among congregationalists, accord very accurately with the primitive pattern.

"*that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our* "*Lord Jesus Christ.*'—May the Lord bless him, and "grant him great success!"

It is worthy of observation that, on this solemn occasion, as well as when he preached at Clipstone, Mr. Hall selected texts of the class most calculated to elicit those peculiar powers for which he was through life distinguished.

In little more than a year after Mr. Hall had been thus publicly designated a preacher of the gospel, having pursued his studies at Bristol with great assiduity and corresponding success, he was, as already hinted, appointed to King's College, Aberdeen, on Dr. Ward's foundation. In his journey thither, he was accompanied by Mr. Joseph Stennett, the son of the late Rev. Dr. Stennett, and another student, Mr. John Pownall, still living. The two former of these had letters to the venerable Dr. John Erskine of Edinburgh; and he again supplied them with introductions to two eminent individuals at Aberdeen. This appears from a letter sent by the doctor, 2d Nov. 1781, to Mr. Ryland of Northampton; from which, as it exhibits his view of the state of things at Aberdeen, at that period, I present a brief extract.

"I had the pleasure of your letter by Messrs. Stennett and Hall last week. They appear to me pleasant young men, and I should have been happy to have had further opportunities of showing my regard to the children of so worthy parents, than their short stay here allowed. Though there are many excellent teachers at Aberdeen, and both they and the ministers are remarkable for purity of morals, I have some fears, from different accounts, that the general strain of preaching there is less evangelical than in several pulpits in Glasgow or Edinburgh. Principal Campbell and Dr. Beattie are, in my opinion, able and worthy men; and my difference with the first, as to the American War and the Popish Bill, has not impaired our mutual esteem. I wrote letters to introduce the young gentlemen to both."

Mr. Hall, for many years afterwards, used often to speak of the affectionate attentions of Dr. Erskine, on this occasion; and of his own feelings, when, on taking leave, the venerable man of God exhorted him to self-

vigilance, kissed him, laid his hand upon his head, blessing him, and commending him to the watchful care of the great Head of the Church.

At the time when he went to Aberdeen, the reputation of the two colleges, King's and Marischal College, was almost equally balanced. At the latter, Principal Campbell and Dr. Beattie, Professor of Moral Philosophy, had attained a high and merited celebrity, both on account of their lectures and their writings: while at King's College, the Divinity lectures of Dr. Gerard were much and greatly esteemed; and some of the other professors were men of eminence. Many, therefore, especially of the divinity students, attended the appropriate lectures at the two colleges.*

Mr. Hall, in a letter addressed to his deservedly prized friend, the late Dr. Ryland, towards the end of this first session at college, speaks thus of his studies and of two of the professors :—

"We entered the Greek class under Mr. Leslie, who, though a man of no apparent brightness of parts, is, notwithstanding, well fitted for his office, being a good grammarian, and attentive to the interests of his pupils. We have been employed in the class in going over, more accurately, the principles of the Greek language, and reading select passages in Xenophon and Homer: and I have privately read through Xenophon's Anabasis, and Memorabilia of Socrates, several books of Homer, and some of the Greek Testament; and am now reading *Longini de Sublimate liber*, which I hope to finish next week."

In the same letter he mentions his reading with Professor Ogilvie, whose versions of the Latin poets he characterizes as "extremely elegant." He laments the

* At King's College, during Mr. Hall's studies there, Mr. John Leslie was Professor of Greek; Mr. Roderick Macleod, Professor of Philosophy, including Mathematics; Mr. W. Ogilvie, Professor of Humanity; Mr. James Dunbar, Professor of Moral Philosophy; and Dr. Alexander Gerard, Professor of Divinity. Though some of these were highly distinguished men, Dr. Gerard was most known to the world of English literature. Among his works are "An Essay on Genius," "An Essay on Taste," two volumes of valuable Sermons, and his "Lectures on the Pastoral Care," published in 1799 by his son, Dr Gilbert Gerard.

want of religious advantages in this seat of learning, and deplores the profanity and profligacy of many of the students; one of whom, he assures his friend, affirmed that he knew no use even in the word "God," except to give point to an oath! To make up for this sad deficiency, he adds, "we have found some agreeable acquaintances in the New Town, and among them the sister of Mr. Cruden, the author of the Concordance!"

The same letter contains evidence that he did not confine his attention solely to classical and mathematical studies. After expressing his admiration of the devotional as well as rational spirit that "lives and breathes in every page of Edwards," he adds:

"My thoughts are at present too much immersed in literary exercises to admit of long or close application of thought to any thing else. I have, however, been thinking a little on the distinction of *natural* and *moral ability*, and have in my mind an objection, upon which I should be glad to have your thoughts. It is briefly this: If, according to Edwards, the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding, and if it be determined, directed, and biassed by the view of the understanding, what room then is left for any notion of moral ability, as distinct from natural? or how can there, in this case, be any depravity of the will, without supposing a prior defect in the understanding? Since the will, if it be wrong in its bias, is first led to that bias by the understanding; and where then the possibility of a *moral inability* consisting with a *natural ability?* This I hope to have some conversation with you upon, when I have the happiness of seeing you. I have with me Edwards on the Will, and have lately perused it often; and the more I read it, the more I admire.'

The lamented death of Sir James Mackintosh has left a blank which none can adequately fill, with regard to Mr. Hall's character, habits, and the developement of his intellectual powers at this period. On application, however, to an esteemed friend, the late Professor Paul, he kindly communicated a few particulars, which I shall give in his own language.

"What I now transmit is drawn from the College records, from the recollection of Dr. Jack, Principal of King's Col-

lege, and formerly for three years a class-fellow of Mr. Hall, and from my own knowledge; for I, also, was a contemporary of Mr. Hall, having commenced my first year's studies when he commenced his fourth. It appears from the album that Mr. Hall entered college in the beginning of November, 1781. His first year was spent principally under the tuition of Mr. Professor Leslie, in the acquisition of the Greek language; his second, third, and fourth years under that of Mr. Professor Macleod, when he studied mathematics, natural philosophy, and moral philosophy. He took his degree in arts (i.e. A.M. degree) on the 30th of March, 1785. Principal Jack says that he attended the Professor of Humanity, Mr. Ogilvie, during the four years he was at college, both for Latin and Natural History; but, as there is no record of the students of the humanity and natural history classes, this fact depends wholly on the Principal's recollection. I learn from the same source that Sir James Mackintosh and Mr. Hall, while at college, read a great deal of Greek in private, and that their reputation was high among their fellow-students for their attainments in that language. Principal Jack also bears testimony to Mr. Hall's great success in his mathematical and philosophical studies, and affirms that he was the first scholar of his class, in the various branches of education taught at college. During one of the sessions the Principal was member of a select literary society, consisting of only eight or ten students, of which society Sir James and Mr. Hall were the distinguished ornaments. None of Mr. Hall's college exercises are now to be found in this place; but my impressions correspond with those of the Principal, that his acquirements were of the very first order; and as Sir James had left college before I entered, having received his A.M. degree 30th March, 1784, there was no one at college in my time who could be at all put in competition with Mr. Hall. But it was not as a scholar alone that Mr. Hall's reputation was great at college. He was considered by all the students as a model of correct and regular deportment, of religious and moral habits, of friendly and benevolent affections."

To this concise summary, I subjoin the few particulars which I gathered from Sir James Mackintosh himself.

When these two eminent men first became acquainted, Sir James was in his eighteenth year, Mr. Hall about a year older. Sir James described Mr. Hall, as attracting

notice by a most ingenuous and intelligent countenance, by the liveliness of his manner, and by such indications of mental activity as could not be misinterpreted. His appearance was that of health, yet not of robust health; and he often suffered from paroxysms of pain, during which he would roll about on the carpet, in the utmost agony; but no sooner had the pain subsided than he would resume his part in conversation with as much cheerfulness and vivacity as before he had been thus interrupted. Sir James said he became attached to Mr. Hall, "because he could not help it." There wanted many of the supposed constituents of friendship. Their tastes at the commencement of their intercourse, were widely different; and upon most of the important topics of inquiry, there was no congeniality of sentiment: yet notwithstanding this, the *substratum* of their minds seemed of the same cast, and upon this, Sir James thought, the edifice of their mutual regard first rested. Yet he, ere long, became fascinated by his brilliancy and acumen, in love with his cordiality and ardour, and "awe-struck" (I think that was the term employed) by the transparency of his conduct and the purity of his principles. They read together; they sat together at lecture, if possible; they walked together. In their joint studies, they read much of Xenophon and Herodotus, and more of Plato; and so well was all this known, exciting admiration in some, in others envy, that it was not unusual, as they went along, for their class-fellows to point at them and say, "*There go Plato and Hērodōtus.*" But the arena in which they met most frequently was that of morals and metaphysics; furnishing topics of incessant disputation. After having sharpened their weapons by reading, they often repaired to the spacious sands upon the sea shore, and still more frequently to the picturesque scenery on the banks of the Don, above the old town, to discuss with eagerness the various subjects to which their attention had been directed. There was scarcely an important position in Berkeley's Minute Philosopher, in Butler's Analogy, or in Edwards on the Will, over which they had not thus debated with the utmost

intensity. Night after night, nay, month after month, for two sessions, they met only to study or to dispute; yet no unkindly feeling ensued. The process seemed rather, like blows in that of welding iron, to knit them closer together. Sir James said, that his companion as well as himself often contended for victory, yet never, so far as he could then judge, did either of them make a voluntary sacrifice of truth, or stoop to draw to and fro the *serra λογομαχίας*, as is too often the case with ordinary controvertists. From these discussions and from subsequent meditation upon them, Sir James learnt more *as to principles* (such, at least, he assured me, was his deliberate conviction) than from all the books he ever read. On the other hand, Mr. Hall through life reiterated his persuasion, that his friend possessed an intellect more analogous to that of Bacon than any person of modern times; and that if he had devoted his powerful understanding to metaphysics, instead of law and politics, he would have thrown an unusual light upon that intricate but valuable region of inquiry. Such was the cordial, reciprocal testimony of these two distinguished men. And, in many respects—latterly, I hope and believe, in *all* the most essential—it might be truly said of both, "As face answereth to face in a glass, so does the heart of a man to his friend."

It will be seen, from the first of a series of letters inserted in this volume, that, shortly after Mr. Hall's return to Aberdeen in November, 1783, he received an invitation from the church at Broadmead, to associate himself with Dr. Caleb Evans, as the assistant pastor; an invitation which he accepted with much doubt and diffidence. After some correspondence it was arranged that Mr. Hall should reside at Bristol, in the interval (of nearly six months) between the college sessions of 1784 and 1785, and then return to Aberdeen to complete his course. In this important session, from the beginning of November 1784 to May 1785, he seems to have devoted himself most sedulously to his studies; especially the Greek language, with moral and intellectual philosophy, and those other departments of inquiry

which are most intimately related to theology. During the session, too, he attended Dr. Campbell's lectures at Marischal College, and frequently profited by the Doctor's expository discourses, delivered once each fortnight; while he generally attended public worship at the church where Mr. Abercromby and Mr. Peters, both regarded as holding correct sentiments, were the alternate preachers. He had now lost his chosen companion, the sharpener of his faculties, by animated yet friendly debate; and he sought for no substitute in society, but resolved to turn the deprivation into a benefit by a more arduous application to his literary pursuits, and by cultivating habits of meditation. "I now," said he, in a letter to his father, "find retirement prodigiously sweet, and here I am "entirely uninterrupted and left to my own thoughts." In this disposition he commenced and concluded the session.

By the time Mr. Hall had thus completed his academical course, his mental powers, originally strong, had attained an extraordinary vigour; and, with the exception of the Hebrew language, of which he then knew nothing, he had become rich in literary, intellectual, and biblical acquisition. On resuming his labours at Broadmead, in conjunction with Dr. Evans, his preaching excited an unusual attention, the place of worship was often crowded to excess, and many of the most distinguished men in Bristol, including several clergymen, were among his occasional auditors.

This popularity not only continued, but increased, until he removed to another sphere of action. The brilliancy and force of his eloquence were universally acknowledged, while, in private life, his instructive and fascinating conversation drew equal admiration. Yet it ought not to be concealed (for I simply announce his own deliberate conviction, frequently expressed in after-life) that at this time he was very inadequately qualified for the duties of a minister of the gospel. He had, it is true, firmly embraced and cordially relied upon those fundamental truths which are comprehended in the declaration, "He that cometh unto God must believe that He *is*, and "that He is the *rewarder* of them that diligently seek

"him:" and he often expatiated, with much originality and beauty, upon the divine attributes, and constantly exhorted men to adhere closely to the path of duty; yet, not often from the higher, namely, the evangelical motives, to pure, and benevolent, and holy conduct. His knowledge of Christianity, as a system of restoration and reconciliation, was comparatively defective and obscure; and he felt but little alive to those peculiarities of the new dispensation, upon which, in maturer life, he loved to dwell. In his preaching he dealt too much in generalities, or enlarged upon topics which, though in a certain sense noble and inspiring, and thus calculated to elevate the mind, did not immediately flow from the great scheme of redemption, which it was his especial office to disclose. The extent of God's matchless love and mercy—the depth of the mystery of his designs—the inexhaustible treasury of his blessings and graces—the wonderful benefits flowing from the incarnation, humiliation, and sacrifice of the Son of God—the delightful privileges of the saints,—were themes to which he recurred far less frequently than in latter days; and he persuaded himself that this was not *very* wrong, because his colleague, Dr. Evans, who had "the care of the church," adverted so incessantly to the doctrines of our Lord's divinity and atonement, of spiritual influence and regeneration, as to leave room for *him* to explore other regions of instruction and interest.

It is possible that Mr. Hall, from his habit of self-depreciation, may have a little overcharged this picture: yet the notes of several of his sermons, preached from 1785 to 1789, taken down by one of the congregation, and which are now in my possession, confirm, to a considerable extent, the existence of the serious defect which he subsequently so much deplored.

Considering his early age, twenty-one, it was manifestly unfavourable to the correct developement of his character *as a preacher*, that in August 1785, only three months after his quitting Aberdeen, he was appointed classical tutor in the Bristol Academy, on the resignation of Mr. Newton. That additional appointment he held

for more than five years, and discharged its duties with marked zeal and activity, and with commensurate success. At this period of his life he was celebrated as a satirist, and would overwhelm such of his associates as tempted him to the use of those formidable weapons, with wit and raillery, not always playful. Aware, however, that this propensity was calculated to render him unamiable, and to give permanent pain to others, (a result which the generosity of his disposition made him anxious to avoid,) he endeavoured to impose a restraint upon himself, by writing the Essay on the "Character of Cleander;"* in which he exposes, with just severity, that species of sarcasm to which he believed himself most prone, and thus, by its publication, gave to others the opportunity, when he slid into this practice, of reproving him in his own language.

It seems to have been remarkably, and doubtless, mercifully, overruled, that, during this period of Mr. Hall's history, though his more judicious and wise friends were often grieved by the free and daring speculations which he advanced in private, he never promulgated direct and positive error from the pulpit. And thus they who were filled with apprehension on account of sallies in conversation, would listen with delight to his public addresses. This will be evinced by a few extracts from the Journals of two of his constant friends.

Mr. *Fuller* writes. "1784, May 7. Heard Mr. Robert Hall, jun., from 'He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.' Felt very solemn in hearing some parts.—The Lord keep that young man!"

Again, "1785, June 14. Taken up with the company of Mr. Robert Hall, jun.; feel much pain for him. The Lord, in mercy to him and his churches in this country, keep him in the path of truth and righteousness."

In like manner, Dr. *Ryland*. "June 8, 1785. Robert Hall, jun., preached wonderfully from Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.' I

* Might Mr. Hall have been stimulated to this undertaking by the recollection of Sir Richard Steele, who wrote and published his "Christian Hero" as a check on his own irregularities?

admire many things in this young man exceedingly, though there are others that make me fear for him. O that the Lord may keep him humble, and make him prudent!"

Again, "June 15. Rode to Clipstone to attend the ministers' meeting. R. Hall, jun., preached a glorious sermon on the immutability of God, from James i. 17, 'The Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.'"

Again, "1785, July 11. Wrote to Robert Hall, jun., this day, respecting his conversation at Birmingham, on his last journey to Bristol. Endeavoured to be as close as ever I could, but I hope with much tenderness. His father sends me word that he has been ill: I hope God means to do him good *by this complaint in his side.*"

Again, "1786, June 13. Sent off a letter to Robert Hall, jun., which I wrote chiefly in answer to one of his some months ago, wherein he replied to mine concerning some disagreeable reports from Birmingham: added some new hints respecting another matter lately reported. O that God may keep that young man in the way of truth and holiness!"

It hence appears that Dr. Ryland, who was nearly twelve years older than Mr. Hall, and had known him from his childhood, did not rest satisfied with silent lamentations. This excellent man, fearing that his young friend was about to precipitate himself into a very dangerous course, sought by kind but strong expostulation to rescue him from the peril; and thus addressed him.

"My very dear Friend,

"The fullest consciousness that I have a right to call you so, as really feeling an earnest and tender concern for your welfare, and the recollection that you apparently allowed it when I last saw you, encourages me to write to you; though I may as well tell you at once that I am going to write to you in the same strain of complaint and censure which I have been constrained to use before. And indeed my fears and grief were never excited to such a degree concerning you as they now are. I still hope, however, you have much love to God; and I trust so much conviction of my sincere friendship, that you will not say of me as one said of Micaiah, 'I hate him, for he is always saying evil of me.' Indeed, the things that grieve me I shall industriously conceal from every body as long as I can; but I fear they will spread fast

enough: for if you openly utter all your mind, there are not many who will mourn in secret over the report."

"It gave me extreme uneasiness to hear, this week, of the general disgust you have given to your former friends at Birmingham, on your last visit. Verily I wish that neither you, nor I, nor others, may fight for the truth with infernal weapons. I would wish to feel in my inmost soul the tenderest pity for the most erroneous men in the world, and to show all proper respect to men of science, and men who are regular in their outward conduct. Nor should I at all approve of violent or harsh language, or like to speak my opinion of the state of individuals. But at the same time I cannot but think that the lusts of the *mind* may as effectually ruin a man as 'the lusts of the *flesh*.' And I must get a good way toward Socinianism myself before I can have any strong hope that a Socinian, living and dying such, will see the kingdom of God. When the merciful Jesus declared, 'He that believeth shall be saved,' &c., I cannot believe that he meant simply, that he shall be saved who believes *that Jesus was not an impostor*, and who believes the *Doctrine of the Resurrection*. But these two articles are, I believe, the whole of Dr. Priestley's Christianity; and if once I were to think this Christianity enough to carry a man to heaven, I should not, I fear, be very strenuous in my endeavours to convince men of the danger of self-righteousness, and the necessity of a reliance on the Atonement. Oh! my dear friend, can I conceive that your mind was deeply impressed with a sense of the divine purity and the justice of God's law, when you could utter so vain and vile a speech as this?"

The Doctor then cites the language imputed to Mr. Hall. It implied that if he were the Judge of all, he could not condemn Dr. Priestley. After animadverting strongly upon the phrase which he understood was actually employed, he proceeds thus:—

"It is, I am sure, not malevolence, but sincere love, that makes me jealous of you. May the Lord keep you! I wish you would look over afresh the Epistle to the Galatians, and examine whether your charity is as chaste as Paul's. I allude to a proverb you have doubtless heard—'Charity is an angel, while she rejoiceth in the truth, a harlot when she rejoiceth in iniquity;'—embracing those whom she should rather pity and weep over.

"Study to enter into the very spirit of Paul's discourse,

1 Cor. i. 18—31, or Gal. ii. 15—21; and if this is consistent with supposing it would be unfair for God to punish any man for rejecting the Gospel, who understood chemistry and philosophy, why, then, retain your favourable opinion of the safety of Socinians?

"Receive this as a proof of the affection with which I am
"Your faithful friend,
"J. RYLAND."

Many high-spirited young men, we can readily imagine, would have treated such a letter as this with contempt; while others would have replied to it in a lofty tone of surprise and indignation. But Dr. Ryland's young friend, notwithstanding the errors into which his impetuosity had hurried him, had too much generosity to regard as insulting what he knew was dictated by affection; and, therefore, anxious to show that he could bear reproof, and be thankful for it, he promptly replied:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I HAVE just received your letter, and think it of so much importance as to deserve an immediate answer. Accordingly, without the least delay, I have set myself to reply to it. I am exceedingly obliged to you for your friendly expostulation, because I know it is the effusion of a pious and benevolent heart that wishes me well. With respect to the conversation at Birmingham, to which you allude, I shall conceal nothing."

He then, at the same time that he denies the precise language that was imputed to him, states what he did really say, and aims to justify the sentiment which he had maintained: disclaiming, however, any approximation to Socinian doctrine.

"You seem to suspect I am far gone in Socinianism; but in this, my dear friend, give me leave to say, you are utterly mistaken. Since I first began to reflect, I do not recollect a time when I was less inclined to Socinianism than at present. I can truly say, it would remove from me all my salvation and all my desire."

Again reverting to the expression he employed, he adds:—

"Allowing it to be improper or too strong, I can only say, it does not belong to all to speak equally temperately;

that the crime of expression can only be judged from the feelings, and that I am certain I did not *utter* it with any lightness of heart, but with deep feelings of earnestness and sincerity. Your charge of imprudence I cordially admit; and now see, with more clearness than I formerly did, that the imprudent should never come into company with the malicious.

"I had more to say; but have no room. I sincerely thank you for your letter, and shall always be extremely grateful for your correspondence, your good wishes, and your prayers.

"Believe me, as ever, affectionately yours,

"R. HALL, junior."

These letters would not have been inserted after the lapse of fifty years, but for the salutary lesson which they supply. If christian friendship always manifested itself in such fidelity as is here evinced, and uniformly experienced so kind and ingenuous a reception, what a different aspect, in a few years, would the christian world assume!

When Mr. Hall was about twenty-three years of age, he had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Robinson, his predecessor at Cambridge, preach; and was so fascinated with his manner as to resolve to *imitate* it. But, after a few trials, he relinquished the attempt. The circumstance being afterwards alluded to, he observed, "Why, "Sir, I was too proud to *remain* an imitator. After my "second trial at ———, as I was walking home, I "heard one of the congregation say to another, 'Really, "Mr. Hall *did remind* us of Mr. Robinson!' That, Sir, "was a knock-down blow to my vanity; and I at once "resolved that if ever I *did* acquire reputation, it should "be my own reputation, belong to my own character, "and not be that of a *likeness*. Besides, Sir,* if I had "not been a foolish young man, I should have seen how "ridiculous it was to imitate such a preacher as Mr. "Robinson. He had a musical voice, and was master "of all its intonations; he had wonderful self-possession, "and could say *what* he pleased, *when* he pleased, and "*how* he pleased; while my voice and manner were

* Mr. Hall very frequently repeated the word, *Sir,* in his conversation; especially if he became animated.

"naturally bad; and far from having self-command, I
"never entered the pulpit, without omitting to say some-
"thing that I wished to say, and saying something that
"I wished unsaid: and, beside all this, I ought to have
"known that for me *to speak slow was ruin*." 'Why
"so?' "I wonder that you, a student of philosophy,
"should ask such a question. You know, Sir, that
"force, or momentum, is conjointly as the body and
"velocity; therefore, as my voice is feeble, what is
"wanted in body must be made up in velocity, or there
"will not be, cannot be, any impression."

This remark, though thrown off hastily, in unreserved conversation, presents the theory of *one* important cause of the success of his rapid eloquence.

Shortly after this, Mr. Hall was, for the first time, in Mr. Robinson's society; I believe in London. Mr. Robinson was affluent in flatteries for those who worshipped him, while Mr. Hall neither courted flattery, nor scattered its incense upon others. In speaking of the Socinian controversy, the elder indulged in sarcasm upon "juvenile defenders of the faith," and made various efforts to "set the young man down," which tempted Mr. Hall to reply that "if *he* ever rode into the field of public "controversy, he should not borrow Dr. Abbadie's *boots*." This enigmatical retort* Mr. Robinson understood, and probably *felt* more than Mr. Hall had anticipated; for he had about that time quitted the field, put off "the boots," and passed to the verge of Socinianism. In the course of some discussions that followed, Mr. Hall, as most of those who were present thought, completely exposed the dangerous sophistry by which Mr. Robinson endeavoured to explain away some very momentous truths. Mr. Robinson, perceiving that the stream of opinion fell in with the arguments of his young opponent, and vexed at being thus foiled, lost his usual placidity and courtesy, and suddenly changed the topic of conver-

* The allusion was to the defence of the divinity of our Lord, published in French, by Dr. Abbadie, in his "Vindication of the Truth of the Christian Religion;" a work from which Mr. Robinson was thought to have borrowed many of his arguments in his "Plea for the Divinity," &c., without acknowledgement.

sation, saying, "the company may be much better em-"ployed than by listening to a raw school-boy, whose "head is crammed with Scotch metaphysics." Nothing but a consciousness that the "raw school-boy" had defeated him, would have thus thrown him off his guard.

In 1788, Mr. Hall, weary of the solitude to which he was often subjected, as a mere lodger, and anticipating marriage in the course of a few months (an anticipation, however, which was not realized), hired a house; his sister Jane, afterwards Mrs. James, kindly consenting to superintend his domestic concerns. From a letter which he then wrote to his father, I extract a few passages.

Feb. 10th, 1788.

"We have a great deal of talk here about the slave-trade; as I understand from your letter you have had too. A petition has been sent from hence to Parliament for the abolishing it; and a committee is formed to co-operate with that in London, in any measure that may be taken to promote their purpose. At Bristol much opposition is made by the merchants and their dependents, who are many, perhaps most of them, engaged in it. Our petition was signed by eight hundred, or upwards; which, considering that *no application has been made to any,* we think a great number. Many things have been written in the papers on both sides: some pieces I have written myself, under the signature *Britannicus,** which I purpose to get printed in a few pamphlets, and shall send one of them to you. The injustice and inhumanity of the trade are glaring, and upon this ground I mainly proceed: upon the *policy* of abolishing it I treat lightly, because I am dubious about it; nor can it be of great consequence to the question in hand; for, if it be proved cruel and unjust, it is impious to defend it....

"I am afraid the abolition will not take place speedily, if at all. The trading and mercantile interest will make great outcry; the scheme will be thought chimerical, and, after producing a few warm speeches, will, I fear, die away."

* * * * * *

"My own temper, I know, needs some correction, and it will be my daily endeavour to mend it: it wants *gentleness.*

* These I have not been able to procure. It would be curious to compare them with his more mature sentiments on the subject, so admirably exhibited in some of his later Essays.

Mr. M—— has done me much good by convincing me, from his own example, to what perfection a temper naturally keen and lofty may be carried."

* * * * * *

"So far, I am happy that my duty and my gratification lie in the same direction: so that every step I take towards improvement, may be a step towards real pleasure. One inconvenience, indeed, I labour under with respect to my temper, by being connected with my sister, and that is, *she never tries it.*"

A serious trial of another kind, however, awaited Mr. Hall—a painful misunderstanding between him and his friend and colleague, Dr. Evans. It continued not only to disturb the minds of both, but, as might be expected, to create partisans among their respective friends, and indeed to endanger the peace of the church at Broadmead, for more than two years. I have read various written papers, and some pamphlets, which relate to this painful affair; and cannot but conclude that, like many others, it originated in such trifling misconceptions as, in more felicitous circumstances, neither party would have suffered to disturb his thoughts for an hour. A few hasty expressions, retorted by others both hasty and strong, tempted the Doctor and his friends to accuse Mr. Hall of ingratitude, and a want of deference to his superior in age and station; he, in his turn, repelled the accusation, in language too natural to a young man glowing with a lofty spirit of independence; and thus, new charges and fresh recriminations arose. The interposition of friends availed but little; for their unhallowed passions became ignited too. After many months spent in this unseemly strife, a meeting between the parties opposed was held, in the presence of two friends of each, at the Mansion House, Mr. Harris, the Mayor of Bristol, at that time the senior deacon of the church at Broadmead, being one of the persons chosen by Dr. Evans. No beneficial effects resulted from this meeting; the individuals, who hoped by their interposition to ensure the restoration of amity, having long before ceased to be impartial judges in the affair. The friends on both sides,

who were convened on this occasion, published their respective statements; from which it appears that those who had taken one part thought Mr. Hall justifiable, and censured Dr. Evans; while those on the other approved of the Doctor's conduct, and condemned that of Mr. Hall.

It will not, then, be expected, that I should draw from the obscurity which time has cast over them, more particulars relating to this unhappy collision. Nor, indeed, should I have adverted to it, had it not operated strongly in preparing Mr. Hall for his removal from Bristol. Whatever regret it might occasion him, on subsequent meditation, it excited no self-reproach, nor left any malevolent feeling. On the decease of Dr. Evans, which took place in 1791, his former colleague prepared an inscription for his monument; and he wrote the following letter to his brother-in-law, Mr. Isaac James, in reply to that which announced the Doctor's death.

"DEAR BROTHER, "*Cambridge, Aug.* 12, 1791.

"The contents of your letter received this day have affected me more than almost any thing of the kind I ever met with in my life. It is in all points of view a most solemn event: but, from obvious circumstances, to *me* it cannot fail of being peculiarly so. It is truly affecting to recollect the friendship that so long subsisted betwixt us, and that it should end so unhappily in a breach that admits of no repair, no remedy!! Yet, though I feel most pungently upon this occasion, I am happy to be able to join with you in declaring that my conscience is not loaded with guilt. Abating too much of an unhappy violence, I have the *mens conscia recti.* Were the circumstances to occur again, a breach would, as before, be inevitable. But though, in justice to myself, I say thus much, there is no one more disposed to lament the deceased than myself, or who has a truer sensibility of the real virtues of his character. I have written to Mr. Higgs, and therefore I need say the less to you upon these melancholy topics. The chief purpose, indeed, of my troubling *you* at present, is to request you will be so kind as to give me the earliest and most particular account of every thing that passes at his funeral; the persons present, the sermon, the impression of the event, deep no doubt and awful, the whole state of things at Bristol, their future pro-

spects and intentions, every thing relating to these matters that you know. The situation of the family and the church, though I doubt not I am the object of their joint abhorrence, I most sincerely compassionate. May God guide and comfort them! I think you and all my friends ought now to bury all that is past, and renew a connexion with the church, if their temper will permit you. My friends will *most oblige me* by carrying it respectfully to the Doctor's family and memory. 'Anger may glance into the bosom of a wise man, but it rests only in the bosom of fools;' and our best improvement of the death of this useful servant of God, will be to imitate his excellencies and forget his errors. Pray write as soon as possible. I shall be extremely impatient till I hear. I am, dear Brother,

"Your affectionate Brother,

"*To Mr. Isaac James.*" "R. HALL."

Before this time it was generally apprehended that Mr. Hall's sentiments had, on some momentous points, deviated considerably from the accredited standards of even moderate orthodoxy; and he had given much pain to some of his Baptist friends on account of his views with regard to re-baptizing. Some correspondence took place between him and the Broadmead Church on these subjects: and, as well that the sentiments he then really held may be known, as that the extent of his declension into positive error may be judged of from his own language, I shall here insert the frank exposition of his opinions which he addressed to the church when he was on the eve of dissolving his connexion with it.

"*Thursday, Dec. 9th,* 1790.

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,

"EVERY token of your respect and attachment sensibly affects me; and as you have requested me to explain myself on those sentiments to which I alluded as reasons of separation, I think it a duty I owe to myself and to you, to give you all the satisfaction in my power.

"1st. In the first place, I am a firm believer in the proper divinity of Jesus Christ; in the merits of Christ as the sole ground of acceptance in the sight of God, without admitting works to have any share in the great business of Justification; and in the necessity of Divine influence to regenerate and sanctify the mind of every man, in order to his becoming a real Christian. Thus far in the affirmative.

"2ndly. In the second place, I am not a Calvinist, in the strict and proper sense of that term. I do not maintain the federal headship of Adam, as it is called, or the imputation of his sin to his posterity; and this doctrine I have always considered, and do still consider, as the foundation of that system. I believe we have received from our first parents, together with various outward ills, a corrupt and irregular bias of mind; but, at the same time, it is my firm opinion that we are liable to condemnation *only* for our own actions, and that *guilt* is a personal and individual thing. I believe in the doctrine of the Divine Decrees, and of course in the predestination of all events, of which the number of the finally saved is one. But this appears to me a different thing from the doctrine of absolute election and reprobation, as it has ever been explained by Calvinists, which does not meet my approbation. Without going into a large field of metaphysical discussion, this is all I think it requisite to say respecting my orthodoxy; but there are two other points which have occasioned a good deal of conversation, and from some quarters a good deal of censure; upon which I shall therefore beg leave to explain myself in a few words.

"3rdly. I am, and have been for a long time, a materialist, though I have never drawn your attention to this subject in my preaching; because I have always considered it myself, and wished you to consider it, as *a mere metaphysical speculation*. My opinion, however, upon this head is, that the nature of man is simple and uniform; that the thinking powers and faculties are the result of a certain organization of matter; and that after death he ceases to be conscious *until the resurrection*.

* * * * * *

"Much has been said upon my opinions respecting Baptism, and I am happy to have this opportunity of explaining my sentiments on that subject in particular, as it affects not only the propriety of my former relation to this church, but of any future connexion I may form with any other Christian society. On this point much mistake, much misrepresentation, I hope not voluntary, has taken place; and on this account I trust you will excuse my dwelling upon it a little more particularly than its importance in other respects might seem to justify. It has been held out to the world by some, that I am *not a Baptist*. I am, both in respect to the subject and to the mode of this institution, a Baptist. To apply this ordinance to infants appears to me a perversion of the intention of the sacred institution; and the primitive,

the regular, and proper mode of administration, I take to be *immersion*. Still it appears to me that sprinkling, though an innovation, does not deprive Baptism of its essential validity, so as to put the person that has been sprinkled *in adult age* upon a footing with the unbaptized. The whole of my sentiments amounts to this:—I would not myself baptize in any other manner than by immersion, because I look upon immersion as the ancient mode, that it best represents the meaning of the original term employed, and the substantial import of this institution; and because I should think it right to guard against the spirit of innovation, which in positive rites is always dangerous and progressive: but I should not think myself authorized to re-baptize any one who has been sprinkled in adult age. I shall only remark, in addition to what I have already said upon this point, that if it be a sufficient objection to my union with a Baptist congregation, then, as all Christendom is composed of Baptists or Pædobaptists, it amounts to my exclusion, as a minister, from every Christian society throughout the whole earth: an interdict equally absurd and inhuman, founded upon a conduct merely negative in chimerical situations seldom or never likely to occur.

"I have thus, in compliance with your wishes, and with all the perspicuity in my power, in a few words explained to you my religious opinions, with a more particular view to the subjects on which I may be supposed most to err: and this avowal I have made, partly as a testimony of the respect I bear you, and partly to vindicate my character from any suspicion of ambiguity or reserve; but not at all with the remotest wish to win popularity, or to court your suffrages; for at present it is as little in my power to accept any invitation to continue, as it may be in your inclination to give it, as I hold myself engaged in honour as a probationer for six months to a respectable society at Cambridge. May peace and prosperity attend you!

"I am, your Friend and Brother,

"With the greatest respect,

"R. Hall."

The vexations and perplexities in which Mr. Hall had been for some time involved, doubtless facilitated his removal to another sphere of action. And he who duly meditates upon the way in which the great Head of the Church renders the movements of his providence subservient to his merciful purposes in Redemption, will, I

am persuaded, trace the superintending hand on this occasion.

Mr. Robinson, the pastor of the church at Cambridge, with which Mr. Hall was now about to be connected, was a man of extensive powers, of some genius, and of considerable industry and research. Fascinating as a preacher, delightful as a companion, perseveringly skilful in the insinuation of his sentiments, his influence could not but be great. From the profession of orthodox opinions, he had passed by a rather rapid transition, not to Socinianism, but far beyond, to the very borders of infidelity; such, at least, was the substance of his declaration to Dr. Priestley, whom he *thanked* for preserving him from that awful gulf. Vain speculation was substituted for knowledge, faith, and experience; confession, and prayer, but seldom made a part of the public worship which he conducted, his effusions before sermon consisting almost altogether of ascriptions of praise; and the congregation became so transformed and deteriorated, in consequence, that, among the more intelligent classes, with only two or three exceptions, "he was esteemed the best Christian who was most skilled in disputation," not he who evinced most of "the spirit of Christ." The majority of the poorer members, however, escaped the contagion, and were ready to co-operate with the late Mr. Foster, who was then the senior deacon, and another of the deacons, who equally deplored the evils which had fallen upon them. Cordially attached to those doctrines which they regarded as fundamental, and therefore as constituting the basis of church union, they were preparing to call upon the whole body to consider the expediency of requesting Mr. Robinson to resign, when his sudden death at Birmingham, just after he had been preaching in Dr. Priestley's pulpit, rendered such a measure unnecessary. On the news of this event reaching Cambridge, Mr. Foster, who was then on his death-bed, made it his last request to some of the most influential men in the church, that they would never consent to the appointment of a Socinian as Mr. Robinson's successor.

From this account of the state of the church at Mr.

Robinson's decease, it will appear how difficult it was to select a successor who would be approved by all; how difficult, also, for that successor to walk steadily in the path of duty.

Mr. Hall, who by this time had attained a high reputation as a preacher, was invited, in June or July, 1790, to preach at Cambridge for one month; after which the invitation was renewed for a longer term. In July the following year, he was invited to take the pastoral charge; the letter, announcing his acceptance of the important trust, will appear in the collection which follows this memoir.

In these transactions and their consequences *still* unfolding, the wisdom and mercy of God are strikingly manifested. There was at that time no man of eminence among the Baptists, besides Mr. Hall, who could for a moment have been thought of by the church at Cambridge as a fit successor to Mr. Robinson; nor was there any Baptist church and congregation with which *he* could become connected, with the same prospect of being useful and happy, according to the views he then entertained. Had Mr. Hall's religious principles and feelings been such in 1790 and 1791, as they became a few years afterwards, not even *his* talents would have made them palatable; and a connexion, had it been formed, would soon have been dissolved: on the other hand, had the church been decidedly and entirely socinianized, he could not conscientiously have become its pastor. The providential correlation soon began to show itself. *Their* looseness of sentiment on many points, which even then he thought momentous, led him to enforce them frequently with the utmost energy; while *his* known freedom of opinion on other points, which they also had been led to canvass freely, preserved him from the odium of orthodoxy. Thinking themselves liberal and unshackled, they could not but congratulate one another that their new pastor, a man of splendid talents, was *almost* as liberal and unshackled as they were. Then again, their want of devotional seriousness, by the force of contrast, heightened his estimate of the value of true piety; and this produced

an augmented earnestness and fidelity, which they first learnt to tolerate, and afterwards to admire. Thus, by the operation of an incessant action and re-action, continued for years, each party exerted a salutary influence on the other; and at length both church and pastor became so distinguished for piety, harmony, and affection, that they, who had known and lamented their former state, were compelled to exclaim, "This hath God wrought." *

The death of Mr. Hall's father, which occurred in March, 1791, had indeed tended greatly to carry his mind back to the state of serious thought with which he entered upon the pastoral office. Meditating, with the deepest veneration, upon the unusual excellencies of a parent now for ever lost to him, he was led to investigate, with renewed earnestness, the truth as well as value of those high and sacred principles, from which his eminent piety and admirable consistency so evidently flowed. He called to mind, too, several occasions on which his father, partly by the force of reason, partly by that of tender expostulation, had exhorted him to abandon the vague and dangerous speculations to which he was prone. Some important changes in Mr. Hall's sentiments resulted from an inquiry conducted under such solemn impressions; and among these may be mentioned his renunciation of *materialism*, which he often declared he "buried in his father's grave."

Attentive to the voice of heavenly admonition, thus addressing him from various quarters, he entered upon his new duties with earnest desires that he might be able

* Though such was the happy issue, I am inclined to think that Mr. Hall found himself in very perilous circumstances, which he had not forgotten when he thus expressed himself in his Memoirs of Mr. Toller:—The reciprocal influence of a minister and a congregation on each other is so incessant and so powerful, that I would earnestly dissuade an inexperienced youth from connecting himself with a people whose doctrine is erroneous, or whose piety is doubtful, lest he should be tempted to consult his ease by choosing to yield to a current he would find it difficult to resist. To root up error, and reclaim a people from inveterate habits of vice and irreligion, is unquestionably a splendid achievement; but it requires a hardihood of character and decision of principle not often found in young persons."

"to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Feeling that to him was consigned the charge of transforming, with God's assistance, a cold and sterile soil into a fruitful field, he determined not to satisfy himself with half measures, but proceeded to expose error, and defend what he regarded as essential truth. The first sermon, therefore, which he delivered at Cambridge, after he had assumed the office of pastor, was on the doctrine of the atonement, and its practical tendencies. Immediately after the conclusion of the service, one of the congregation, who had followed poor Mr. Robinson through all his changes of sentiment, went into the vestry, and said, 'Mr. Hall, this preaching won't do for us: it will only suit a congregation of old women.' "Do you mean my sermon, Sir, or the doctrine?" 'Your *doctrine*.' "Why is it that the *doctrine* is fit only for old women?" 'Because it may suit the musings of people tottering upon the brink of the grave, and who are eagerly seeking comfort.' "Thank you, Sir, for your concession. The doctrine will not *suit* people of *any* age, unless it be true; and if it *be true*, it is not fitted for old women alone, but is equally important at every age."

This individual, and three or four other men of influence, with about twenty from the poorer classes, shortly afterwards withdrew from the congregation, and met together on the Sunday evenings at a private house. The then Rev. William Frend, fellow and tutor of Jesus College, an avowed Socinian, became their religious instructor. This separate assembly, however, did not continue many months; for the person, at whose house they met, was, ere long, taken up and tried for sedition, and convicted;* and the proceedings against Mr. Frend, on account of his pamphlet entitled "Peace and Union," which for so long a time kept the University of Cambridge in a state of great agitation, and which ended in

* This individual after went to America, and became a minister. He was afterwards appointed Chaplain to a ship in the United States' Navy, and subsequently had the honour of preaching twice before the Congress.

his expulsion from it, drew away his attention from the little band of seceders.

Mr. Hall's ministerial labours, at this interesting period of his life, were blessed with the happiest results, when the benefit seemed likely to be for a while suspended, by the intrusion of *violent* political discussion. The impression made throughout Europe by the French revolution of 1789, was such, that not merely here and there an individual indulged in political speculation, but almost every man threw himself into the vortex of political controversy. The clergy of every order and station, the laity of every rank and class, yielded alike to the impulsion; and he who did not declare his decided and cordial adhesion to one or other of the contending parties, might expect the censure of both, for his want of spirit or of principle. Cambridge, hitherto characterized as the whig university, was, at this epoch, split into the most violent party divisions, and the public was deluged with sermons from the pulpit, and pamphlets from the press, in which the respective advocates of "things as they are," and of "things as they should be," defended their opposite views with the utmost zeal, and too often with the most unbecoming rancour.

At such a season, Mr. Hall, then under thirty years of age, was not likely to maintain an entire silence. When a man's quiescence was sufficient to render his principles equivocal, *he* was certainly not one who would make a secret of his opinions. He thought that political ethics had almost ceased to be referable to any principle of pure ethics. He hesitated not to avow that the grand object of all good government must be to promote the happiness of the governed, to assist every individual in its attainment and security. He regarded a government chiefly anxious about the emoluments of office, or aiming to consolidate its own power at home and to aid the efforts of despots abroad, while it neglected the comfort and welfare of individuals in middle or lower life, whose burdens it augmented by a mistaken course, as a government that should be *constitutionally* opposed by every lawful means.

He gave to such subjects, also, more than political considerations. He looked upon those European governments which were founded on oppression, and trampled on the natural rights of man, as operating most fatally in the extinction of light and virtue. He regarded the conditions of those who tyrannize, and of those who are the objects of tyranny, as each productive of a numerous and distinct class of vices; and thought that the consequent darkness, ignorance, and criminality of the general mass under despotic governments, in great measure, if not entirely, incapacitated them for the pure and elevated enjoyments of heaven. It was hence a permanent conviction of his mind, "that he who is instrumental "in perpetuating a corrupt and wicked government, is "also instrumental in unfitting his fellow-men for the "felicity of the celestial mansions." Could it then be matter of surprise that, believing and feeling all this, he should exult when "the empire of darkness and of despotism had been smitten with a stroke which sounded through the universe;*" or, when other ministers of the gospel were signalizing themselves by opposing this view of things, that he should, for a short interval, be drawn aside from pursuits more congenial with his prevailing tastes, and in many important respects, I think, more compatible with his holy calling, and at once endeavour to prove that "christianity is consistent with a love of freedom," and that true christianity will prevail most where genuine freedom is most diffused and best understood?

Cordial, however, as was Mr. Hall's attachment to a cause in which he conceived man's best interests to be closely interwoven, and strong as was his hatred of despotic measures, or what he regarded as such, either at home or abroad, I do not think that even their joint operation would have overcome his repugnance to writing, had it not been for skilful *abettors*, who first worked upon his feelings, and then extorted from him the promise of preparing a work for the public. Such, if I have not

* See the splendid passage towards the end of his "Christianity consistent with a love of freedom."

been misinformed, was the origin of his first political pamphlet; and such, I know, from his own declaration, often repeated, was the origin of the eloquent and powerful "Apology for the Freedom of the Press." The evening after the event occurred, to which he alludes in the "Apology," with respect to Mr. Musgrave, he attended a periodical meeting of a book-society, constituted principally of members of his own congregation, and of Mr. Simeon's, and usually denominated *Alderman Ind's Club*, that distinguished ornament of Mr. Simeon's congregation being the treasurer. Every person present expressed himself in terms of the strongest indignation at the insult offered to Mr. Musgrave; every one thought it highly desirable that some man of talent at *Cambridge* should advocate the principles maintained by the friends of liberty, especially of those who avowed evangelical sentiments, and the necessity for their united activity, in the present state of the country and of Europe. Mr. Hall spoke as decidedly as any of them with regard to the urgent necessities of the case; when they all, having brought him precisely into the position at which they were aiming, exclaimed, that it was he to whom alone they could look in this exigency. "Alderman Ind, you "know, Sir (said he), was an excellent man; pure as a "seraph, and gentle as a lamb. I thought that if *he* felt "roused, if *he* could join with the rest in urging me, I "might bring all hesitation to a truce; and so, in an evil "hour, I yielded to their entreaties. I went home to my "lodgings, and began to write immediately; sat up all "night; and, wonderful for me, kept up the intellectual "ferment for almost a month; and then the thing was "done. I revised it a little as it went through the press; "but I have ever since regretted that I wrote so hastily "and superficially upon some subjects brought forward, "which required touching with a master-hand, and exploring to their very foundations. So far as I under"stand the purely political principles which are advanced "in that pamphlet, they are, I believe, correct: at all "events they are mine still. But, I repeat it, I yielded "in an evil hour; especially if I had any wish to obtain

"permanent reputation as a political writer. Perhaps, "however, the pamphlet had its use in those perilous "times." Such was Mr. Hall's account of this publication. How far it indicates the tone of deterioration, in which, almost through life, he characterized his own productions, they who are best acquainted with the "Apology" will be most competent to decide; unless, indeed, their prepossessions and prejudices should disqualify them for deciding aright.

But, whatever might be Mr. Hall's opinion of this work, it does not seem to have been regarded by the public as of little value. Three editions were called for, I believe, within less than six months; and then, the author not sanctioning a republication, various editions were printed and circulated surreptitiously. Its more splendid and impressive passages were repeatedly quoted in the periodicals of the day, and many of its arguments were cited as perfectly conclusive. It was also widely circulated in America; and is there still regarded as having been powerfully influential in diffusing those liberal political principles which, of late, have acquired so marked an extension and ascendency in Britain.

Mr. Hall, however, even at the time when this pamphlet was written, though very decided in his sentiments both as a reformer and a dissenter upon those political grounds of nonconformity, which he in later years saw reason in some measure to quit, could not, in any correct sense of the term, be denominated a partisan: and he soon experienced such inconveniences from his political celebrity, as induced him to recede, not from his principles, or from the avowal of them in private, but from the farther advocacy of them in public. It forced upon him the society of men whose conduct and character he could not approve; it tended to draw him, much more than he could conscientiously justify, from retirement and study; and thus, ere long, he became of opinion, to adopt his own words, "that the christian ministry is in danger of "losing something of its energy and sanctity, by embark-"ing on the stormy element of political debate." His elegant eulogium on Dr. Priestley in his first pamphlet,

and the warm terms of admiration in which he used to speak of him in private, tempted many to fancy and to say, that he, also, was a Socinian at heart; and although his preaching became more and more distinguished by the introduction and energetic application of evangelical truth, he still found himself often so equivocally placed, as to render his denial of Socinianism quite imperative. On one of these occasions, Mr. Hall having in his usual terms panegyrized Dr. Priestley, a gentleman who held the Doctor's theological opinions, tapping Mr. Hall upon the shoulder with an indelicate freedom from which he recoiled, said, 'Ah! Sir, we shall have *you* among us soon, I see.' Mr. Hall, startled and offended by the rude tone of exultation in which this was uttered, hastily replied, "*Me* amongst *you*, Sir! *me* amongst *you*! Why, "if that were ever the case, I should deserve to be tied "to the tail of the great red dragon, and whipped round "the nethermost regions to all eternity!"

Notwithstanding the reasons Mr. Hall thus had for some degree of reserve, yet in this, as in every other period of his life, he displayed a remarkable relish for social intercourse. He did not court the society of literary men; indeed he rather shrunk from it, because he felt the risk of having his thoughts too much engrossed by mere matters of language or of science: he had acquired enough of both to value them greatly; yet he desired to regard them principally as subservient to the higher purposes of his profession. Besides this, the philosophy of mind, in which he took extreme interest, was then but little cultivated at Cambridge. Happily, however, the leading individuals in his congregation were very intelligent and well-informed, able to appreciate his talents justly, and skilful in bringing his conversational powers into full action. With one or other of these he usually spent his evenings, selecting most frequently those who possessed the enjoyments of domestic life, and often stealing in earlier than he was expected, that he might take his share, for an hour, in the gambols and gaiety of the children.

He was, but only for a short time, an imitator of Dr.

Johnson. Some years afterwards, when reminded of this, he replied—"Yes, Sir: I aped Johnson, and I "preached Johnson; and I am afraid with little more of "evangelical sentiment than is to be found in his Essays: "but it was youthful folly, and it was very great folly. "I might as well have attempted to dance a hornpipe "in the cumbrous costume of Gog and Magog. My "puny thoughts could not sustain the load of the words "in which I tried to clothe them."

There needed not, in truth, the principle of imitation, to produce great similarity in some important respects between these two extraordinary men. They manifested the physical differences between a melancholic and a cheerful temperament; in consequence of which, the one was slow and measured in utterance, the other rapid and urgent. But, in conversation, both evinced a ready comprehension of the whole subject, a quick and decisive accuracy in answering, and a perfect self-dependence. They both disliked a protracted debate, and would sometimes terminate a discussion, when it was growing tiresome, by a strong and pointed observation which it was difficult to encounter. Both were alike in exhibiting a rather more than ordinary degree of faith in things of a preternatural or mysterious description. In both, too, there were the similarities of acute intellect united with splendid imagination; and of a natural majesty of mental and moral genius which commanded veneration. But, in the correction of his faults, and the improvement of his virtues, Mr. Hall possessed, in his superior piety, an immense advantage over Dr. Johnson.

In argument he was impetuous. and sometimes overbearing; but if he lost his temper he was deeply humbled, and would often acknowledge himself to blame. On one of these occasions, when a discussion had become warm, and he had evinced unusual agitation, he suddenly closed the debate, quitted his seat, and, retiring to a remote part of the room, was overheard by a lady who was just entering, to ejaculate with deep feeling, "Lamb of "God! Lamb of God! calm my perturbed spirit."

Mr. Hall's personal habits, not only at the time of

which I am now speaking, but in a certain degree through life, though not precisely those of an absent man, were those of one whose mental occupations kept his thoughts at a distance from various matters of ordinary observance, and made him regardless of a thousand things which most persons never forget. Thus, on his return from an evening visit, if not watched, he would take a wrong hat or great coat;—if not sought after by some of the congregation, he would mistake the proper evening of a week-day service, having in such cases been so absorbed in study as to lose a day in his reckoning; for the same reason, he often mistook the day or the hour of an appointment;—when on any of his journeys to London he engaged to take up the letters of his friends, it was not unusual, after his return, to find them all in his portmanteau, or in his great coat pocket. These, or similar instances of forgetfulness, occurred daily; but, exciting the attention of his affectionate and watchful friends, they seldom exposed him to serious inconvenience.

None of these peculiarities sprung from an affectation of singularity; they simply marked an inattention to things of minor importance. Nor was there united with them a regardlessness of the proprieties of society, a disdain of such civilities and attentions as were usual in the classes with whom he most associated. He had never aimed to acquire a facility in the manners and habits of genteel life; but he had a native ease and grace, which was obviously distinguishable from any acquired habit. It was a grace that could neither be bought nor borrowed; on all proper occasions, heightened by the dignity which naturally comported with his character and office; and uniformly blended with that genuine simplicity which often accompanies intellectual greatness, and is always, if I mistake not, an attribute of moral greatness.

Several particulars in the preceding account of Mr. Hall's first years at Cambridge will be illustrated by the following brief sketch, which I have received from a gentleman who had the most favourable opportunities, as well as the requisite taste and discrimination, for correctly estimating his character.

"I had but a slight acquaintance with Robert Hall from 1790 to 1793: from thence to the end of 1796, I knew him intimately. At that period his creed was imperfect, wanting the personality of the Holy Spirit, and wavering between the terrors of Calvin and the plausibilities of Baxter.* His infirmities, which were increasing, he concealed with dexterity, opposed with vigour, and sustained with uncommon patience. In his ministerial situation he was far from easy; and he was vehemently severe upon Robinson for leaving his church a wilderness, and bequeathing his successor a bed of thorns.

"His religious conversation in company was not frequent, and for the most part doctrinal; but, in private, his experimental communications were, in beauty, elevation, and compass, beyond all I ever heard. The memory of a man of seventy-three will not afford particulars; and the general impression can neither be obliterated nor expressed.

"In his manners he was a close imitator of Dr. Johnson; fond of tea-table talk, and of the society of cultivated females, who had the taste to lend him an ear, and the ability requisite to make attention a favour. He has confessed to me the taking thirty cups of tea in an afternoon, and told me his method was to visit four families and drink seven or eight cups at each.

"He knew, as well as any man, what bad men were, and what good men should be; yet was often wrong in his judgment of individuals. From this deficiency in the knowledge of mankind, he sometimes trusted his false, and abused his true, friends: when he perceived his error he changed his conduct, but, I suspect, very seldom confessed his mistake.

"He did not, then, read much; but was probably more hindered by pain than by indolence. A page, indeed, was to him more serviceable than a volume to many. Hints from reading or discourse, passing through his great mind, expanded into treatises and systems, until the adopted was lost in the begotten; so much so, that the whole appeared original. I am persuaded, however, that when I knew him he had not, by many degrees, attained his meridian. I should regret my incapacity to do him justice, and give you assistance, were I not persuaded that only the bud was exhibited to me, while the bloom and the fruit were reserved for those more deserving to be happy."

I had the privilege of becoming first known to Mr.

* This phraseology will mark the bias of my truly respected correspondent.

Hall in January, 1797. During that year we dined daily at the same table: the next year we met almost every morning to read together: and for some years afterwards scarcely a week passed in which I was not three or four times in his society. When I first became acquainted with him I was young, and ignorant of nearly every thing but the most rudimental knowledge of language and science; of which I possessed just enough to employ as instruments of inquiry. I was eager to acquire information; but ran some risk of turning my mind to that which was useless, or merely showy, instead of directing its best energy to that which was truly valuable. In such circumstances to be allowed the friendship and enjoy the advice and assistance of such a man, was among my richest blessings. There was scarcely a thought worth preserving, scarcely a principle of action worth reducing to practice, scarcely a source of true enjoyment, but I derived from him, or I was led to receive or to appreciate more correctly through his agency. If, then, for some pages, my name should occur more often in immediate association with that of my beloved and revered friend, than may seem consistent with ordinary rules, may I be freed from the charge of egotism? especially, if I assure the reader, that, while nothing affords me more pleasure, nothing awakens more gratitude to the Father of Mercies, than the retrospect of the intellectual and higher than intellectual delights which were then mine, few things more humble me than the conviction that, though I enjoyed them so long, I suffered them to pass away without commensurate improvement.

Mr. Hall kindly admitted me to the privacy of his study, in addition to the advantage of frequent intercourse with him in the society of his friends. Desirous to assist others in forming their estimate of this extraordinary individual, I shall not merely speak of his character, habits, and pursuits, but occasionally introduce some of his conversational remarks; confining myself, however, to such as from their brevity always occur to my thoughts in the *ipsissima verba* originally employed. If I do not succeed in depicting the man, which, indeed

I feel conscious is far beyond my powers, I may at least attempt to describe him as he then appeared to me.

When I first saw Mr. Hall, I was struck with his well-proportioned athletic figure, the unassuming dignity of his deportment, the winning frankness which marked all that he uttered, and the peculiarities of the most speaking countenance I ever contemplated, animated by eyes radiating with the brilliancy imparted to them by benevolence, wit, and intellectual energy. When he spoke, except in the most ordinary chit-chat, to which, however, he seldom descended, he seemed not merely to communicate his words, but himself: and I then first learnt the difference between one who feels while he is speaking, and whose communicative features tell you that he does, and one who, after he has spoken long and with apparent earnestness, still does not feel. I then learnt also, that, though talents may convey their results to others, and activity may carry on others in its stream; yet there is something distinct in the structure of a great mind which never can be so transferred to another as to become its native characteristic. Mr. Hall had a buoyancy and playfulness when among his select friends, which were remarkably captivating. Among strangers there was a reserve for a short time, but it was soon shaken off, especially if he found that they were pious or intelligent. The presence of a man who gave himself airs of condescension usually induced him to remain silent or to retire. He could enjoy the society of men of moderate information; and it was interesting to observe how, by a few apt questions, he would ascertain in what direction their pursuits lay, and then so draw them out as to give them the pleasure of feeling that they were contributing to *his* stock of that kind of knowledge which they could not but think useful. He was eminently alive to the emotions of pity, an affection always calculated to inspire attachment, but which in a man of abstract habits is, I fear, very unusual. He was generous by nature, as well as upon principle, and in seasons of affliction would remarkably identify himself with those who most needed sympathy. He rather avoided, than

sought, expressions of thankfulness; and sometimes when he became oppressed by them, would hastily say, "Thank you, thank you: you have said more than "enough; remember, God has sent into the world a "more powerful, and more noble sentiment, than even "gratitude."

For some years, he made it a rule to pay a pastoral visit to every member of his church, once each quarter. He did the same, also, with regard to such of his ordinary hearers as be thought willing to receive him as a minister of religion. These were not calls, but *visits*, and usually paid on evenings, that he might meet the whole assembled family. Among the lower classes, to make them quite at their ease, he would sit down with them at supper; and, that this might involve them in no extra expense, he took care they should all know that he preferred a bason of milk.*

He persuaded the poorer members of his church to form little meetings for reading, religious conversation, and prayer, going "from house to house." These were held once a fortnight, I think, in the summer time; once a week during the winter. He made it a point of official duty to attend them frequently; and regarded them, with the weekly meetings in the vestry, as the best thermometer for ascertaining the religious state of his people.

Proceeding thus, it was not surprising that he conciliated the affections of his friends, and secured the veneration of the pious; that he extended around him a growing conviction of his excellency, and carried on many in the stream of his mental and moral power.

In him all was at the utmost remove from gloom or moroseness. Even the raillery in which he indulged, showed his good nature, and was exceedingly playful;

* The necessitous widows of his flock were not forgotten in these periodical visits. To them, he said, he repaired for religious instruction, and was seldom disappointed. On such occasions he selected his ever favourite repast of *tea*. It was his practice to carry tea and sugar with him, taking especial care that there should be more than could possibly be needed, and asking permission to leave the remainder behind him.

and, notwithstanding the avowed and lamented impetuosity in argument to which he was prone, nothing, so far as I ever saw, but conceit, engrafted upon stupidity, provoked his impatience, and called forth a severity which he scarcely knew how to restrain.* With regard to disposition, the predominant features were kindness and cheerfulness. He never deliberately gave pain to any one, except in those few extreme cases, where there appeared a moral necessity of "rebuking sharply" for the good of the offender. His kindness to children, to servants, to the indigent, nay, to animals, was uniformly manifest. And such was his prevailing cheerfulness that he seemed to move and breathe in an atmosphere of hilarity; which, indeed, his countenance always indicated, except when the pain in his back affected his spirits, and caused his imagination to dwell upon the evils of Cambridgeshire scenery.

This was, in his case, far from a hypothetical grievance. It seriously diminished his happiness at Cambridge, and, at length, was the main cause of his quitting it. In one of my early interviews with him, before I had been a month at that place, he said to me, "What do you think of Cambridge, Sir?" 'It is a very interesting place.' "Yes, the place where Bacon and Barrow, and Newton "studied, and where Jeremy Taylor was born, cannot "but be *interesting*. But that is not what I mean; what "do you say to the scenery, Sir?" 'Some of the public buildings are very striking, and the college walks very pleasing; but—' and there I hesitated: he immediately added—"but there is nothing else to be said. What "do you think of the surrounding country, Sir? Does "not it strike you as very insipid?" 'No, not precisely

* The following is an instance of his manner of checking inordinate vanity. A preacher, in whom this quality grievously preponderated, having delivered a sermon in Mr. Hall's hearing, pressed him with a disgusting union of self-complacency and indelicacy, to state what he thought of the sermon. Mr. Hall remained silent for some time, hoping his silence would be rightly interpreted; but this only caused the question to be pressed with greater earnestness. Mr. Hall at length said, "There was one very fine passage, Sir." 'I am rejoiced to hear you say so. Pray, Sir, which was it?' "Why, Sir, it was the passage from the pulpit into the vestry."

so.' "Aye, aye: I had forgotten; you come from a flat "country; yet you *must* love hills; there are no hills "here." I replied, 'Yes, there are; there are Madingley hill, and the Castle hill, and Gogmagog hill.' This amused him exceedingly,—and he said, "Why, as to "Madingley, there is something in that; it reminds you "of the Cottons, and the Cottonian Library; but that is "not because Madingley is a high hill, but because Sir "Robert Cotton was a great man; and even he was not "born *there*. Then, as to your second example, do you "know that the Castle hill is the place of the public ex-"ecutions? that is no very pleasant association, Sir. "And as to your last example, Gogmagog hill is five "miles off, and many who go there are puzzled to say "whether it is natural or artificial. 'Tis a dismally flat "country, Sir; dismally flat.* Ely is more than twelve "miles distant, but the road from Cambridge thither "scarcely deviates twelve inches from the same level; "and *that's* not very interesting. Before I came to Cam-"bridge, I had read in the prize poems, and in some "other works of fancy, of 'the banks of the Cam,' of "'the sweetly flowing stream,' and so on; but when I "arrived here, I was sadly disappointed. When I first "saw the river as I passed over King's College Bridge, I "could not help exclaiming, Why, the stream is standing "still to see people drown themselves! and that I am "sorry to say is a permanent feeling with me." I ques-

* On Mr. Hall's last visit to Cambridge, one of his friends took him out for a morning's ride, and showed him the improvements as to cultivation, by means of new inclosures, &c. "True," said he, "but still "there is that odious flatness, that insipid sameness of scenery all "around; there is no variety, no beauty." His friend, anxious that he should at least admire something, said, 'Look at these fields, with the crops of corn so smooth and so abundant; are not *they* pleasant? And do they not excite the idea of plenty?' He rejoined with his usual promptness, "Oh! yes: and so does a large meal-tub, filled to the brim. But I was not thinking of *plenty*, but of *beauty*."

At another time, when indulging the same strain of remark, he said, "Beyond the College precincts there is not a tree for a man to hang "himself upon when he is weary of the barrenness of the place." A gentleman present reminded him that there were some trees in the way to Grantchester, a village about two miles from Cambridge. Mr. Hall replied, "Yes, Sir, I recollect. Willows, I believe, Sir:—Nature hanging out signals of distress, Sir."

tioned the correctness of this impression, but he immediately rejoined, "Shocking place for the spirits, Sir; I "wish you may not find it so; it must be the very focus "of suicides. Were you ever at Bristol, Sir? there *is* "scenery, scenery worth looking upon, and worth thinking of: and so there is even at Aberdeen, with all its "surrounding barrenness. The trees on the banks of the "Don are as fine as those on the banks of the Cam; and "the river is alive, Sir; it falls over precipices, and foams "and dashes, so as to invigorate and inspire those who "witness it. The Don is *a river*, Sir, and the Severn is "*a river;* but not even a poet would so designate *the* "*Cam*, unless by an obvious figure he termed it the "*sleeping* river."

The semi-playful and rapid manner in which he uttered things of this kind, did not always conceal the deep feeling of incurable and growing dislike with which he was struggling.

When I first became known to Mr. Hall, he had recently determined to revise and extend his knowledge in every department, "to re-arrange the whole furniture of his mind, and the economy of his habits," and to become a thorough student. He proposed devoting six hours a day to reading; but these, unless his friends sought after him, were often extended to eight or nine. He thought himself especially defective in a tasteful and critical acquaintance with the Greek poets; and said he should "once more begin at the beginning." He set to work, therefore, upon the best treatises on the Greek metres then extant. He next read the Iliad and Odyssey twice over, critically; proceeded with equal care through nearly all the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides; and thence extended his classical reading in all directions. To the Latin and Greek poets, orators, historians, and philosophers, he devoted a part of every day for three or four years. He studied them as a scholar, but he studied them also as a moralist and a philosopher; so that, while he appreciated their peculiarities and beauties with his wonted taste, and carefully improved his style of writing and his tone of thinking by the best models

which they present, he suffered them not to deteriorate the accuracy of his judgement in comparing their value with that of the moderns. Perhaps, however, this assertion should be a little qualified; for, not only at the period of which I am now speaking, but, in great measure, through life, while he spoke of the Greek and Latin poetry in accordance with the sentiments and feelings of every competent classical scholar, he, with very few exceptions, unduly depreciated the poetry of the present times.

Much as he delighted in classical literature, he was by no means inclined, nor could he have reconciled it with his notions of duty, to circumscribe his reading within its limits. The early Christian fathers, the fathers of the Reformation, the theological writers, both puritan and episcopalian, of the seventeenth century, the most valuable authors on all similar topics down to the present time, including the most esteemed French preachers, were all perused with his characteristic avidity:* what was most valuable in them became fixed in his unusually retentive memory; and numerous marginal and other references in the most valuable of his books, prove at once the minuteness and closeness of his attention, and his desire to direct his memory to the substances of thought, and not unnecessarily to load it with mere apparatus.

Like many other men of letters, Mr. Hall, at this period, found the advantage of passing from one subject to another at short intervals, generally of about two hours: thus casting off the mental fatigue that one subject had occasioned by directing his attention to another, and

* Considering his prevailing love of simplicity, I have always thought it singular that he should, for several years, have preferred Bossuet to all the other French preachers. Many years ago I transcribed from his copy of the *Oraisons Funebres,* these lines in his hand-writing: "The first of mortal compositions; inferior only to those words unutter-"able which compose the songs of seraphs around the throne." And I recollect that, about the same time, on one of his congregation saying to him, 'The impressive conclusion of your Sermon this morning, Sir, reminded me very much of Bossuet,' he replied, "I am sorry for it. "There is no preacher of whom I should more reluctantly remind my "congregation than Bossuet. I should come off most miserably in the "comparison."

thereby preserving the intellect in a state of elastic energy from the beginning to the end of the time devoted daily to study.

Not long after he had entered upon this steady course of reading, he commenced the study of Hebrew, under Mr. Lyons, who then taught that language in the University. He soon became a thorough proficient in it; and, finding it greatly to increase his knowledge of the Old Testament, as well as of its relation to the New, and considerably to improve and enlarge the power of Scripture interpretation, he, from thence to the close of his life, suffered scarcely a day to pass without reading a portion of the Old Testament in the original. This practice flowed naturally from one of his principles of action, namely, to go to the fountain-head for information, rather than to derive it from the streams; and from the continued application of that principle, it was found that his habit of reading originals often impaired the accuracy of his quotation of passages from our authorised version, having, in fact, become more familiar with the Hebrew and Greek texts than with any translation. This, which was conjectured by some of his hearers at Cambridge, was amply confirmed by the subsequent observation of his intimate and much esteemed friend, Mr. Ryley, at Leicester.

It would be useless to record, even briefly, Mr. Hall's opinions of the numerous authors, ancient and modern, which he read at this period with such close attention, since they accord generally with those of all men of correct taste and sound judgement. Yet perhaps I may state, with regard to his chief uninspired favourite among the Greek writers, that to none of the ornaments of pagan antiquity did he refer in such terms of fervid eulogy as to Plato. Not Cudworth himself could appreciate him more highly. He frequently expressed his astonishment at the neglect into which he apprehended the writings of Plato were sinking; and said that an entire disregard of them would be an irrefragable proof of a shallow age. Milton, he remarked, gave the noblest proofs, in his prose writings, of a knowledge and love of

Plato; and he expressed a surprise, almost bordering upon contempt, in reference to those who classed this wonderful man with the schoolmen. It was his frequent remark, that even when Plato wrote upon the most abstract subjects, whether moral, metaphysical, or mathematical, his style was as clear as the purest stream, and that his diction was deeply imbued with the poetic spirit. On occasions when he ran no risk of the charge of pedantry, he would, by appropriate quotations, confirm these views. He delighted to expatiate upon this philosopher's notions of vice and virtue, of idleness and industry; and often adduced the platonic definition of education, as "that which qualifies men to be good citizens, and renders them fit to govern or to obey." On one occasion he pointed to a passage, in the first Republic, I think, from which it appeared that Plato perceived the advantages resulting from *the subdivision of labour*, and suggested the natural progress of such subdivision in proportion to the advance of civilization.

In speaking of this philosopher, Mr. Hall illustrated his view of the evil of studying a Greek author, with the aid of a Latin version, by a reference to *Serranus's* magnificent edition of his works, in the Latin version of which he said he had often detected errors. He also mentioned a ridiculous blunder of one of the English translators, who had, it seems, availed himself of a Latin version, in which, as was customary two or three hundred years ago, the omission of an *m* or an *n* was indicated by a bar placed over the preceding letter. Disregarding this superposed bar, the translator had read *hirudo* instead of *hirundo*, and thus, upon Plato's authority, declared the *horse-leech* instead of the *swallow* to be the harbinger of the spring!

I have dwelt rather longer upon these topics than would be at all necessary, were it not to correct the notion which some persons have entertained, that Mr. Hall was indolent, and that, though when stimulated to the effort he would exert himself as a profound thinker, yet he was not a man of research, or, in the ordinary acceptation, a good scholar.

When Mr. Hall proposed that we should devote an hour every morning to reading together, he asked me to assist him in his mathematical studies; adding, that as a matter of mutual advantage, it might be well that, on alternate mornings, I should be his mathematical tutor, and he my instructor in metaphysics. To this proposal I gladly assented; and it has long been my persuasion that the scheme flowed in great measure from his desire to call my attention to general literature, and especially to the science of mind.

At that period, though he was strong and active, he often suffered extremely from the pain to which I have before adverted, and which was his sad companion through life. On entering his room to commence our reading, I could at once tell whether or not his night had been refreshing; for, if it had, I found him at the table, the books to be studied ready, and a vacant chair set for me. If his night had been restless, and the pain still continued, I found him lying on the sofa, or more frequently, upon three chairs, on which he could obtain an easier position. At such seasons, scarcely ever did a complaint issue from his lips; but, inviting me to take the sofa, our reading commenced. They, however, who knew Mr. Hall, can conjecture, how often, if he became interested, he would raise himself from the chairs, utter a few animated expressions, and then resume the favourite reclining posture. Sometimes, when he was suffering more than usual, he proposed a walk in the fields, where, with the appropriate book, as our companion, we could pursue the subject. If *he* was the preceptor, as was commonly the case in these peripatetic lectures, he soon lost the sense of pain, and nearly as soon escaped from our author, whoever he might be, and expatiated at large upon some train of inquiry or explication, which our course of reading had suggested. As his thoughts enkindled, both his steps and his words became quicker, until, ere long, it was difficult to say, whether the body or the mind were brought most upon the stretch in keeping up with him. This peculiarity I have noticed in a few other men of vigorous intellect and lively imagination.

Mr. Hall's avowed object, in recurring at all to his mathematical studies, was the acquisition of so much geometry, trigonometry, and conic-sections, as would enable him thoroughly to comprehend the entire scope of the reasoning in Maclaurin's "Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries." For this, indeed, his college studies had in a great measure prepared him; and there would have been but little to learn, could he have been satisfied to proceed as students often do. But it was not in his nature to advance, unless he ascertained the firmness of the ground at every step. He reasoned philosophically, for instance, on the nature of ratios and proportions; so that we had to clear our way through the recondite lectures of Barrow relative to those points, before we could advance to trigonometry. His logical habits, also, made him very reluctant to pass over any geometrical proposition, in which he could not trace the analysis as well as the synthesis. In this manner, and with such views, we went through the proposed course. Of what utility all this was ultimately to Mr. Hall, I cannot precisely say; but I can testify that it was of permanent advantage to his mathematical preceptor, who had not previously formed the habit of tracing apparent results to their foundation; but who, from that period, pursued science with a new interest, kept his eye more steadily upon ultimate principles, and learnt to value such researches quite as much for their intellectual discipline as for their practical benefit.*

In reference to the philosophy of mind, after we had gone slightly over Locke's Essay, his Conduct of the

* Shortly after my removal to Woolwich, I invited my late valued friend, Dr. Hutton, to dine with Mr. Hall, at my house. Mr. Hall, for the purpose of drawing the Doctor into conversation, asked him a few questions suggested by some of Barrow's Disquisitions in reference to mathematical measure, and its application to force, momentum, &c. They essentially involved the metaphysics of the subjects of inquiry. He also expatiated upon the imaginative, as well as the rational process, involved in the genesis of curves by motion, as taught by Barrow, and Newton. The next day Dr. Hutton said to me, "What an extraordinary man that friend of yours is! Why, he was born to be a mathematician. If you could persuade him to give himself up to the sciences, as Priestley did, he would teach us all something."

Understanding, and Watts's Ontology, which I had before read, we studied Berkeley, Wollaston, Hartley, Andrew Baxter, Reid, some portions of Bacon's Essays, and of his Treatise on the Advancement of Learning; or rather, I should say, I had the advantage of learning what was most or least valuable in each and all of these, from this admirable commentator. We were about to proceed to Search's (Abraham Tucker's) "Light of Nature,"* when some circumstances, which I cannot recall to mind, rendered it inconvenient for us thus to meet, and brought these delightful readings and commentaries to a close. We did not then go through any of Dugald Stewart's works, Mr. Hall regarding him as an elegant expositor of Reid, but greatly inferior in originality. From Bacon's Essays he used to read passages aloud, with the warmest expressions of commendation: his *philosophical* works he thought much overrated as to their influence in diffusing the true spirit of the inductive philosophy.

I must not omit to specify, as a peculiarity in the structure of Mr. Hall's mind, that although in every important case he detected and placed in the utmost prominence, an essential defect in the reasoning, a too rapid generalization, or any other unwarrantable deduction, that occurred in Berkeley, or Watts, or Hartley, he was very slow to perceive, very reluctant to admit, any such in the writings of Andrew Baxter. The reader who is conversant with such speculations will recollect, that in the second volume of Baxter's book on "the Soul," he affirms that our dreams are prompted by separate immaterial beings, and defends his theory with much ingenuity. As we advanced in Baxter's arguments, Mr. Hall exclaimed, "this is very beautiful, Sir; yet, I apprehend there must "be some flaw in the reasoning." I suggested one or two objections; he showed immediately that they could not apply. On our next meeting, he accosted me with, "Well, Sir, have you detected any fallacy in Baxter's

* Mr. Hall characterized this as a work in which the noblest philosophy was brought down by a master-hand, and placed within the reach of every man of sound understanding.

Theory?" 'Yes, I think I have.' This, however, was soon disposed of, and then another and another. I at length referred to Dugald Stewart's Theory, after examining which, he said, "I do not think this tenable, but I "suppose it must be admitted that Baxter does not *quite* "make out his case. Yet he was a man of great acu- "men—why did the Scotch philosophers run him down "so?"

Still farther to illustrate Mr. Hall's character, his turn of thought and expression, I will now bring together a few such incidents and short remarks, occurring between 1796 and 1803, as present themselves most vividly to my mind.

It will already have appeared that benevolence was a prevailing characteristic. When he had aided a poor man to the full extent of his own pecuniary means, he would sometimes apply to one of his affluent friends. "Poor ——— "is in great distress: some of his family are ill, and he can- "not supply proper necessaries. Lend me five shillings for "the poor fellow: I will pay you again in a fortnight, un- "less in the mean time you find that the case deserves your "help, and then the donation shall become yours."

His disapprobation of avarice bore a natural relation to his own benevolence. Being informed that a rich man in the neighbourhood, who was by no means celebrated for his liberality, had attended to a tale of distress without relieving it, he said, "Yes, yes: he would listen, but without inclin- "ing his head. He may lend a distant ear to the murmur- "ings from the vale beneath, but he remains like a moun- "tain covered with perpetual snow."

On another occasion a person, talking to him of one whom they both knew, and who was very penurious, said—"Poor "wretch! you might put his soul into a nut-shell." "Yes, "Sir, (Mr. Hall replied,) and even then it would creep out "at a maggot-hole."

His love of sincerity in words and actions were constantly apparent. Once, while he was spending an evening at the house of a friend, a lady who was there on a visit, retired, that her little girl, of four years old, might go to bed. She returned in about half an hour, and said to a lady near her— 'She is gone to sleep. I put on my night-cap, and lay down by her, and she soon dropped off.'—Mr. Hall, who over-

heard this, said,—" Excuse me, Madam: do you wish your " child to grow up a liar?" 'Oh dear no, Sir; I should be " shocked at such a thing.' " Then bear with me while I " say, you must never *act* a lie before her; children are very " quick observers, and soon learn that that which assumes " to be what it is not, is a lie, whether acted or spoken." This was uttered with a kindness which precluded offence, yet with a seriousness that could not be forgotten.

His dislike to compliments was thus expressed:—" In " compliments two and two *do not* make four; and twenty " and twenty fall very far short of forty. Deal not, then, in " that deceitful arithmetic."

It was said in Mr. Hall's hearing that 'compliments were pleasing truths, and flatteries pleasing untruths.' He remarked—" Neither of them are *pleasing* to a man of reflec-" tion, for the falsehoods in this case so nearly assume the " semblance of truth, that one is perplexed to tell which is " given; and no man is pleased with perplexity."

" You remember Mr. ———, Sir,' 'Yes, very well.' " Were you aware of his fondness for brandy-and-water?" " 'No.' " It was a sad habit: but it grew out of his love " of story-telling; and that, also, is a bad habit, for a min-" ister of the gospel. As he grew old, his animal spirits " flagged, and his stories became defective in vivacity: he, " therefore, took to brandy-and-water; weak enough it is " true, at first, but soon nearly 'half-and-half.' Ere long he " indulged the habit in a morning; and when he came to " Cambridge he would call upon me, and, before he had " been with me five minutes, ask for 'a little brandy-and-" water,' which was, of course, to give him a little artificial " spirits to render him agreeable in his visits to others. I " felt great difficulty; for he, you know, Sir, was much older " than I was; yet being persuaded that the ruin of his " character, if not of his peace, was inevitable, unless some-" thing was done, I resolved upon one strong effort for his " rescue. So the next time he called, and, as usual, said— " 'Friend Hall, I will thank you for a glass of brandy-and-" water,' I replied,—" Call things by their right names, and " you shall have as much as you please.' 'Why, don't I " employ the right name? I ask for a glass of brandy-and-" water.' 'That is the current, but not the appropriate " name; ask for *a glass of liquid fire and distilled damnation*, " and you shall a gallon.' Poor man! he turned pale, and " for a moment seemed struggling with anger. But know-" ing that I did not mean to insult him, he stretched out his

"hand, and said—'Brother Hall, I thank you from the "bottom of my heart.' From that time he ceased to take "brandy-and-water."

In one of my early interviews with Mr. Hall, I used the word felicity three or four times in rather quick succession. He asked—"Why do you say felicity, Sir? Happiness is a "better word, more musical and genuine English, coming "from the Saxon." 'Not more musical, I think, Sir.' "Yes, "more musical, and so are words derived from the Saxon "generally. Listen, Sir: 'My heart is smitten, and withered "like grass;'—there's plaintive music. Listen again, Sir: "'Under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice;'—there's "cheerful music." 'Yes, but *rejoice* is French.' "True, "but all the rest is Saxon, and rejoice is almost out of tune "with the other words. Listen again: 'Thou hast delivered "my eyes from tears, my soul from death, and my feet from "falling:' all Saxon, Sir, except *delivered*. I could think of "the word *tear*, Sir, till I wept. Then, again, for another "noble specimen, and almost all good old Saxon-English: "'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days "of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for "ever.'"

Shortly after this I was reading the original edition of Doddridge's Pneumatology, and asked Mr. Hall to lend me Kippis's edition, in which the references to other authorities, on the various topics discussed, are greatly increased. He told me that he did not possess Kippis's edi ion, in a tone which *then* surprised me a little, as it showed that he did not highly estimate Kippis's authority. I therefore asked, 'Was not Dr. Kippis a clever man?' "He might be "a very clever man by nature, for aught I know, but he laid "so many books upon his head that his brains could not "move." This was to me, who at that period devoted much more time to reading than to thinking, an admirable lesson.

On being asked whether he was an Arminian or a Calvinist, he said—"Neither, Sir; but I believe I recede farther "from Arminianism than from Calvinism. If a man profess "himself a decided Arminian, I infer from it that he is not "a good logician; but, Sir, it does not interfere with his "personal piety: look at good Mr. Benson, for example. I "regard the question more as metaphysical than religious."

'What do you think, Mr. Hall, of the preaching of Mr. ————?' "I can scarcely say. His sermons have no "hooks; they take no hold of the mind." 'Yet, Sir, he

"often introduces thoughts that are very pretty:' "Very "pretty! Why, Sir, a row of tea-caddies in a shop of Tun- "bridge ware is very pretty. But, what then? They are "only empty tea-caddies."

A lady who had been speaking of the Supreme Being with great familiarity, but in religious phraseology, having retired, he said, "I wish I knew how to cure that good lady of her "bad habit. I have tried, but as yet in vain. It is a great "mistake to affect this kind of familiarity with the King of "kings, and speak of him as though he were a next-door "neighbour, from the pretence of love. Mr. Boyle's well- "known habit was infinitely to be commended. And one "of our old divines, I forget which, well remarks, that 'No- "thing but ignorance can be guilty of this boldness; that "there is no divinity but in a humble fear, no philosophy "but shows itself in silent admiration.'"

When two or three gentlemen were discussing the question, whether a man of no religion can be a successful minister of the gospel, surprise was expressed that Mr. Hall remained silent. "Sir, (said he, in reply,) I would not deny "that a sermon from a bad man may sometimes do good; "but the general question does not admit of an argument. "Is it at all probable, that one who is a willing servant of "Satan (and that you know, Sir, is the hypothesis you "assume), will fight *against* him with all his might, and if "not, what *success* can be rationally expected?"*

Mr. Hall did not permit his sedulous cultivation of the mind to draw him aside from the cultivation of the heart. The evidences were, indeed, very strong, that his preparation for ministerial duty was devotional as well as intellectual. Thus, his public services, by a striking gradation, for months and years, evinced an obvious growth, in mental power, in literary acquisition, and in the seriousness, affection, and ardour of a man of piety. His usefulness and his popularity increased; the church and congregation became considerably augmented; and in 1798 it was found necessary to enlarge the place of worship, to accommodate about two hundred more persons.

Early in the year 1799, a severe fever, which brought

* Several more miscellaneous gleanings from Mr. Hall's remarks in conversation are inserted in Appendix, Note A.

him, in his own apprehension, and that of his friends, to the brink of the grave, gave him an opportunity of experiencing the support yielded by the doctrines of the cross "in the near view of death and judgement." He "never before felt his mind so calm and happy." The impression was not only salutary, but abiding; and it again prompted him to the investigation of one or two points, with regard to which he had long felt himself floating in uncertainty. Thus, although he had for some years steadily and earnestly enforced the necessity of divine influence in the transformation of character, and in perseverance in a course of consistent, holy obedience, yet he spoke of it as "the influence of the Spirit of God," and never in express terms, as "the influence of the Holy Spirit." The reason was, that though he fully believed the necessity of spiritual agency in commencing and continuing the spiritual life, he doubted the doctrine of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. But about this time he was struck with the fact, that whenever in private prayer he was in the most deeply devotional frame, "most overwhelmed with the sense that he was nothing, "and God was all in all," he always felt himself inclined to adopt a trinitarian doxology. This circumstance occurring frequently, and more frequently meditated upon in a tone of honest and anxious inquiry, issued at length in a persuasion that the Holy Spirit is really and truly God, and not an emanation. It was not, however, until 1800, that he publicly included the personality of the Holy Spirit, in his statements of the doctrine of spiritual influence.

In attempting to give some idea of the general character and style of Mr. Hall's public services, while I had the privilege of hearing him at Cambridge, I feel that I shall neither adequately describe what his preaching really was, nor even do justice to my own conceptions of it.

His manner of reading the Scriptures at the beginning of the service was not generally interesting; nor did the portion read always bear an obvious reference to the text or subject afterwards brought forward. But when passages of Scripture were quoted in the sermon, they were

so delivered as to give to their true meaning the most intelligible prominence and force.

His prayers were remarkable for their simplicity, and their devotional feeling. No person could listen to them without being persuaded that he who uttered them was really engaged in prayer, was holding communion with his God and Father in Jesus Christ. His tones and his countenance throughout these exercises were those of one most deeply imbued with a sense of his unworthiness, and throwing himself at the feet of the Great Eternal, conscious that he could present no claim for a single blessing but the blood of atonement, yet animated by the cheering hope that the voice of that blood would prevail. The structure of these prayers never indicated any preconceived plan. They were the genuine effusions of a truly devotional spirit, animated by a vivid recollection of what, in his own state, in that of the congregation, of the town and vicinity, needed most ardently to be laid before the Father of Mercies. Thus they were remarkably comprehensive, and furnished a far greater variety on the successive occasions of public worship, than those of any other minister whom I have ever known. The portions which were devoted to intercession, operated most happily in drawing the affections of his people towards himself: since they showed how completely his christian sympathy had prepared him to make their respective cases his own.

The commencement of his sermons did not excite much expectation in strangers, except they were such as recollected how the mental agitation, produced by diffidence, characterized the first sentences of some of the orators of antiquity. He began with hesitation, and often in a very low and feeble tone, coughing frequently, as though he were oppressed by asthmatic obstructions. As he proceeded his manner became easy, graceful, and at length highly impassioned; his voice also acquired more flexibility, body, and sweetness, and, in all his happier and more successful efforts, swelled into a stream of the most touching and impressive melody. The farther he advanced, the more spontaneous, natural, and free from

labour, seemed the progression of thought. He announced the results of the most extensive reading, of the most patient investigation, or of the profoundest thinking, with such unassuming simplicity, yet set them in such a position of obvious and lucid reality, that the auditors wondered how things so simple and manifest should have escaped them. Throughout his sermons he kept his subject thoroughly in view, and so incessantly brought forward new arguments, or new illustrations, to confirm or to explain it, that with him amplification was almost invariably accumulative in its tendency. One thought was succeeded by another, and that by another, and another, each more weighty than the preceding, each more calculated to deepen and render permanent the ultimate impression. He could at pleasure adopt the unadorned, the ornamental, or the energetic; and indeed combine them in every diversity of modulation. In his higher flights, what he said of Burke might, with the slightest deduction, be applied to himself, "that his imperial fancy "laid all nature under tribute, and collected riches from "every scene of the creation, and every walk of art;" and at the same time, that could be affirmed of Mr. Hall which could *not* be affirmed of Mr. Burke, that he never fatigued and oppressed by gaudy and superfluous imagery. Whenever the subject obviously justified it, he would yield the reins to an eloquence more diffusive and magnificent than the ordinary course of pulpit instruction seemed to require; yet so exquisite was his perception of beauty, and so sound his judgement, that not the coldest taste, provided it were real taste, could ever wish an image omitted which Mr. Hall had introduced. His inexhaustible variety augmented the general effect. The same images, the same illustrations, scarcely ever recurred. So ample were his stores, that repetition of every kind was usually avoided; while in his illustrations he would connect and contrast what was disjoined and opposed, or distinctly unfold what was abstracted or obscure, in such terms as were generally intelligible, not only to the well-informed, but to the meanest capacity. As he advanced to his practical applications, all his

mental powers were shown in the most palpable but finely balanced exercise. His mind would, if I may so speak, collect itself and come forth with a luminous activity, proving, as he advanced, how vast, and, in some important senses, how next to irresistible those powers were. In such seasons his preaching communicated universal animation: his congregation would seem to partake of his spirit, to think and feel as he did, to be fully influenced by the presence of the objects which he had placed before them, fully actuated by the motives which he had enforced with such energy and pathos.

All was doubtless heightened by his singular rapidity of utterance,—by the rhythmical structure of his sentences, calculated at once for the transmission of the most momentous truths, for the powers of his voice, and for the convenience of breathing freely at measured intervals—and more than all, by the unequivocal earnestness and sincerity which pervaded the whole, and by the eloquence of his most speaking countenance and penetrating eye. In his sublimer strains, not only was every faculty of the soul enkindled and in entire operation, but his very features seemed fully to sympathize with the spirit, and to give out, nay, to *throw* out, thought, and sentiment, and feeling.

From the commencement of his discourse an almost breathless silence prevailed, deeply impressive and solemnizing from its singular intenseness. Not a sound was heard but that of the preacher's voice—scarcely an eye but was fixed upon him—not a countenance that he did not watch, and read, and interpret, as he surveyed them again and again with his rapid, ever-excursive glance. As he advanced and increased in animation, five or six of the auditors would be seen to rise and lean forward over the front of their pews, still keeping their eyes upon him. Some new or striking sentiment or expression would, in a few minutes, cause others to rise in like manner: shortly afterwards still more, and so on, until, long before the close of the sermon, it often happened that a considerable portion of the congregation were seen standing,—every eye directed to the preacher,

yet now and then for a moment glancing from one to another, thus transmitting and reciprocating thought and feeling:—Mr. Hall himself, though manifestly absorbed in his subject, conscious of the whole, receiving new animation from what he thus witnessed, reflecting it back upon those who were already alive to the inspiration, until all that were susceptible of thought and emotion seemed wound up to the utmost limit of elevation *on earth*,—when he would close, and they reluctantly and slowly resume their seats.*

Scenes like this I have witnessed repeatedly, so productive of intense and hallowed feeling, that, after an interval of nearly forty years, they present themselves to my mind with a more vivid influence than many of the transactions of the last month.

And surely the delightful retrospection may be safely indulged, when it is considered that these sublime exertions were made for the promotion of man's best interests—to warn the impenitent—to show to the sinner the fatal error of his way—to invite the self-condemned to the only, the all-effectual remedy—to console and encourage the faithful—to distribute the bread of life among

* Striking evidences of the most stimulating immediate impression frequently occurred. I specify only two examples.

In 1812, Mr. Hall, who then resided at Leicester, paid one of his periodical visits to Bristol, and as usual, often preached at Broadmead. He delivered a most solemn and impressive sermon on the text "Dead in trespasses and sins;" of which the concluding appeals were remarkably sublime and awful. The moment he had delivered the last sentence, Dr. Ryland, then the pastor of the church, hastened part of the way up the pulpit stairs, and, while the tears trickled down his venerable face, exclaimed with a vehemence which astonished both the preacher and the congregation,—"Let all that are alive in Jerusalem pray for the dead that they may live!"

In 1814, Mr. Hall, while preaching among his old friends at Cambridge, just before he commenced the application of his sermon, uttered a short, but very fervent ejaculatory prayer, during which the whole congregation arose from their seats. Mr. Hall seemed surprised for a moment, and but for a moment, and remained in prayer for about five minutes. He then resumed his sermon, and continued preaching for more than twenty minutes, in such a strain of magnificent and overwhelming eloquence, as the extraordinary incident might be expected to produce from powers and feelings like his, the whole congregation standing until the close of the sermon.

those who must otherwise perish—to "build up the "church in her most holy faith;" when it is known also, that while men of taste and intellect were both gratified and instructed, the uncultivated rustic heard, and understood, and "received the Word of Life," and went on his way rejoicing. Numerous and diversified as were the feelings excited by this extraordinary preacher, none were more prevailing than surprise that one so richly endowed should seem so utterly unconscious of it, and gratitude that the Great Head of the church should have called such a man to his service, and placed him in so important a station as Cambridge, when his intellectual powers seemed to have nearly attained their full maturity and vigour.

I must not, I perceive, allow myself to sketch the difference between his sermons and his expositions, or between his preaching at Cambridge and in the neighbouring villages: nor must I dwell upon the weekly evening services, when he met a few of his people, chiefly of the poorer classes, in the vestry of his place of worship, and, in a strain of the most chaste and simple eloquence, comforted and instructed them in the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God."* The diversity of his powers, the sincerity of his character, the warmth of his love to God and man, were in all alike apparent: and no one that was not the victim of prejudice, or the slave of sin, could have seen him engaged in the service of God, without being ready to testify, "this man must have read much, thought much, and prayed much," to be thus admirably furnished for his great work.

It would be highly instructive and gratifying to know by what process so finished a preacher, so exquisite and tasteful a writer, as Mr. Hall, prepared his respective

* The topics of these evening lectures were often biographical. The lives and characters of Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Hannah, Samuel, Ruth, Daniel, &c., were briefly delineated, and made the basis of some useful practical reflections. Whenever the subject would fairly allow it, these reflections had an appropriate bearing upon the duties, the trials, and perplexities of persons in humble life. The sermon on "John fulfilled his course," inserted in this collection, is very analogous in its character to the discourses to which I here refer; but its commencement is more elaborate.

compositions for the pulpit and the press. But the reluctance with which he spoke either of himself or of his occupations, deprives us of much of this desirable information. At the time when our intercourse was most frequent and unrestrained, I have often been with him while he was preparing for the pulpit, and have occasionally ventured to ask him a few questions; his answers, always frank and elucidatory, however concise, enabled me, by means, also, of frequent reference to his notes on different sermons which I heard delivered, to form tolerably satisfactory conjectures as to the course pursued. He then stated, as he since has to different friends, that he never proceeded even to think of adopting a specific text, as fitted for a sermon, until the matter it presented stood out in the form of a particular, distinct, and precise topic; he could then take it up and lay it down as he pleased. Of his extraordinary power of abstraction I have spoken in another place.* By its means he could, at pleasure, insulate, nay, in a manner enclose himself, from every thing around him; and thus pursue his mental operations. It was usual with him to have five or six subjects under simultaneous training; to either of which he could direct his attention as inclination or necessity required. The grand division of thought, the heads of a sermon, for example, he would trace out with the most prominent lines of demarcation; and these for some years supplied all the hints that he needed in the pulpit, except on extraordinary occasions.† To these grand divisions he referred, and upon them suspended all the subordinate trains of thought. The latter, again, appear to have been of two classes altogether distinct; outline trains of thought, and trains into which much of the detail was interwoven. In the outline train, the whole plan was carried out and completed as to the argument:

* In a note that precedes his sermon on Modern Infidelity.

† As an example, both of comprehensive miniature outline, and of provision in the notes for accurate expression, when he wished to state with clearness and precision his theological sentiments on a most momentous point, see Mr. Hall's own analysis of the sermon on John i. 35, 36, and the language actually employed in the sermon itself.

in that of detail, the illustrations, images, and subordinate proofs, were selected and classified; and in those instances where the force of an argument, or the probable success of a general application, would mainly depend upon the language, even that was selected and appropriated, sometimes to the precise collocation of the words. Of some sermons, no portions whatever were wrought out thus minutely; the language employed in preaching being that which spontaneously occurred at the time: of others, this minute attention was paid to the verbal structure of nearly half: of *a few*, the entire train of preparation, almost from the beginning to the end, extended to the very sentences. Yet the marked peculiarity consisted in this, that the process, even when thus directed to minutiæ in his more elaborate efforts, did not require the use of the pen; at least at the time to which these remarks principally apply.* For, Mr. Hall had a singular faculty for continuous mental composition, apart from the aid which writing supplies. Words were so disciplined to his use, that the more he thought on any subject, the more closely were the topics of thought associated with appropriate terms and phrases; and it was manifest that he had carefully disciplined his mind to this as an independent exercise, probably to avoid the pain and fatigue which always attended the process of writing. Whenever he pleased he could thus pursue the consecution to a great extent, in sentences, many of them perfectly formed and elaborately finished, as he went along, and easily called up again by memory, as occasion required; not, however, in their separate character, as elements of language, but because of their being fully worked into the substance of thought. It hence happened that the excellence which other persons often

* Mr. Hall doubtless varied his manner of preparation in different periods. For three or four years after his settlement at Leicester, he wrote down nearly a third of the sermon, and left all the rest to flow from the outline plan while he was preaching. But for some years afterwards he seldom allowed his notes to exceed two pages, and is thought to have indulged himself more than at any other period of his life in entirely extemporaneous eloquence. At that time his sermons were especially distinguished by simplicity and pathos.

attain as to style, from the use of the pen, in written, visible composition, (employing the eye upon words, instead of fixing the memory upon substantial mental product, and, it may be, diminishing the intellectual power by substituting for one of its faculties a mechanical result,) he more successfully and uniformly attained by a purely meditative process. And I am persuaded that if he could have *instantly* impressed his trains of thought upon paper, with the incorporated words, and with the living spirit in which they were conceived, hundreds if not thousands of passages would have been preserved, as chaste and polished in diction, as elastic and energetic in tone, as can be selected from any part of his works. What, however, could not thus be accomplished by the pen, has been achieved, as to immediate impression, in the pulpit; and hence his celebrity, unequalled, in modern times, as a sacred orator.

In preparing for the press, the process was in many respects essentially different. There was, from the outset, a struggle to overcome the reluctance to write, arising from the anticipation of increased pain, which he knew *must* be endured so long as he was engaged in the mechanical act, and at every return to the labour he had a new reluctance to surmount. There was, moreover, the constant effort to restrain a mind naturally active, ardent, and rapid in all its movements, to a slow progression; nay, a farther effort, and, to a mind so constituted, a very irksome one, to bring the thoughts back from the ultimate issue to which they were incessantly hastening, and cause them to pass and repass, again and again, by a comparatively sluggish course, the successive links in a long chain. Nor was this all. He had formed for himself, as a writer, an ideal standard of excellence, which could not be reached:* his perception of beauty in composition was so delicate and refined, that in regard to his own productions it engendered perhaps a fastidious taste; and, deep and prevailing as was his humility, he was not insensible to the value of a high reputation, and, therefore, cautiously guarded against the risk of dimi-

* "I am tormented with the desire of writing better than I can."

nishing his usefulness among certain classes of readers, by consigning any production to the world that had not been thoroughly subjected to the *labor limæ*. Hence the extreme slowness with which he composed for the press; writing, improving, rejecting the improvement; seeking another, rejecting it; recasting whole sentences and pages; often recurring precisely to the original phraseology; and still oftener repenting, when it was too late, that he had not done so. All this he lamented as a serious defect, declaring that it gave, in his own view, to his written compositions an air of stiffness and formality which deprived him of all complacency in them. And I cannot but feel persuaded that, notwithstanding the exquisite harmony and beauty which characterize every thing that he has published, they were, even in point of felicity of diction, and the majestic current and force of language, inferior to the "winged words" that often escaped from his lips, when "his soul was enlarged" in the discharge of ministerial duty.

May we not suggest a probable reason for this, by observing that when Mr. Hall stood forth as the minister of the sanctuary, he placed the fire upon the altar in the humble confidence that it would be kept alive by the communication of grace and spirit from on high; but that, when he came before the public as an author, he sometimes extinguished his own flame, pure and ethereal as it notwithstanding was, in his efforts to ornament the vase in which he held it up to view.*

But I must not dwell longer on these topics.

In the beginning of the year 1799, Mr. Hall had the happiness of renewing personal intercourse with his early friend. Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Mackintosh, being about to deliver a course of lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, deemed it expe-

* That Mr. Hall did not always require much time for the production of elegant and spirited writing, interspersed with passages of remarkable beauty, and the most elaborate polish, is manifest from his two early political publications, both composed *currente calamo*, and each yielding as powerful and finished specimens of style and thought as can be drawn from his Works.

dient, for the completion of some of the extensive researches which that important undertaking required, to reside for a few months at Cambridge, that he might consult the more valuable of the college libraries, as well as the public library belonging to the University generally. Another distinguished individual, the late Dr. Samuel Parr, spent several weeks at Cambridge at the same time, for the purpose of visiting some of his old friends, of associating with Mr. Mackintosh, and of becoming personally acquainted with Mr. Hall, whose character he had long known and highly valued. Mr. Hall, pleased to refresh his spirits in the society of his beloved fellow-student, and by no means unwilling to glean something from the stores of so profound a scholar as Dr. Parr, often spent his evenings with these two eminent men, and a few members of the University, who were invited to their select parties, and with whom from that time he cultivated an intimacy.

This circumstance led to the formation of Mr. Hall's most inveterate habit—that of smoking. Previously to this period he had always censured the practice in the strongest terms; but, on associating with Dr. Parr, his aversion to what he used to denominate "an odious custom," soon passed away. The Doctor was always enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke, from sun-rise until midnight; and no person could remain in his company long without great inconvenience, unless he learnt to smoke in self-defence. Mr. Hall, therefore, made the attempt, and quickly overcame every obstacle. I well recollect entering his apartment just as he had acquired this happy art; and seeing him sit at ease, the smoke rising above his head in lurid, spiral volumes, he inhaling and apparently enjoying its fragrance, I could not suppress my astonishment. "O Sir, (said he) I am "only qualifying myself for the society of a Doctor of "Divinity; and this, holding up the pipe, is my test of "admission."

Mr. Hall's Cambridge friends were divided in their feelings and wishes with regard to this new practice. The majority approved it, from a belief that the narcotic in

fluence of tobacco would mitigate the pain which he had so long endured. Others, apprehending that his habit of converting *every thing* into a source of enjoyment would transform him into an unremitting smoker, and that injury to his health would ensue, ventured to expostulate with him. I belonged to the latter class, and put into his hands Dr. Adam Clarke's pamphlet on "The Use and Abuse of Tobacco," with a request that he would read it. In a few days he returned it, and at once, as if to preclude discussion, "Thank you, Sir, for Adam "Clarke's pamphlet. I can't refute his arguments, and "I can't give up smoking."

We now approach the time when Mr. Hall had acquired a signal extension of celebrity. Many who had hailed the French Revolution of 1789 as an event productive of extensive benefit, were compelled to admit, after a few years, that the great leaders in that Revolution, and still more their followers, committed grievous blunders, and grosser crimes, from the want of higher than political principles to control their actions. Yet, in the false security which some felt, and others insidiously aimed to inspire, it was suspected but by few, that much of our periodic literature had, under the plea of encouraging free discussion, become irreligious in its tendency, and that various unprincipled demagogues in London, and the large manufacturing towns, not only held up to admiration the conduct of the detestable actors in "the reign of terror," but were constantly exerting themselves to disseminate democracy and atheism conjointly. Such, however, was the fact. From 1795 to 1799, debating rooms were opened in various parts of the metropolis, in which the most barefaced infidelity was taught, and to which the lower classes were invited, often on Sunday evenings, by a variety of specious allurements. Mr. Hall was no sooner convinced of the existence of these sources of evil, and of the mischief they produced, than he began to use the voice of warning, in his private intercourse among his people, and to impress upon such of the young as he feared had received a sceptical bias, that of all fanaticism, the fanaticism of infi-

delity then prevalent was at once the most preposterous and the most destructive.

Mr. Hall's persuasion of the continuance and growth of this infidel spirit, induced him to preach and publish his celebrated sermon on "Modern Infidelity;" which was not, therefore, as many affirmed, a hasty production, written under excited feelings and false alarms, but the deliberate result of a confirmed belief, that the most strenuous efforts were required to repel mischief so awfully and insidiously diffused.

Before the publication of this sermon, its author had fully "counted the cost" as to the obloquy which it would bring upon him from various quarters; but he did not at all anticipate its extraordinary success, and the corresponding extension of his reputation. As repeated editions were called for, he yielded his assent with great hesitation, from a fear that the copies would remain unsold; and he was the last to see, what every one else perceived, that it had carried his celebrity as a profound thinker and elegant writer far beyond the limits of the denomination to which he was so bright an ornament.

Immediately after this sermon issued from the press, the consistency and integrity of the author were vehemently attacked in several letters which appeared in the "Cambridge Intelligencer," then a popular and widely circulated newspaper. Its editor, Mr. Flower, had received in an ill spirit Mr. Hall's advice that he would repress the violent tone of his political disquisitions, and had, from other causes which need not now be developed, become much disposed to misinterpret his motives and depreciate his character. He, therefore, managed to keep alive the controversy for some months, occasionally aiding, by his own remarks, those of his correspondents who opposed Mr. Hall, and as often casting illiberal insinuations upon the individual who had stepped forward in defence of the sermon and its author. A few months after this discussion subsided, Mr. Flower, who had been summoned before the House of Lords, and imprisoned in Newgate for a libel on Bishop Watson, published an exculpatory pamphlet; in which, with a view to draw

the attention of the public as speedily as possible from his own unmanly and disingenuous conduct, while at the bar of the House, he soon passed from his personal defence to a virulent attack upon Mr. Hall, his former pastor.

Shortly afterwards, another controvertist, a Mr. Anthony Robinson, unwilling that Mr. Flower and his coadjutors should gather all the laurels in so noble a conflict, hastened into the field; and, it must be admitted, left them far behind. He published, in a pamphlet of more than sixty pages, "An Examination of Mr. Hall's Sermon." He did not bring against the preacher the positive charge of apostasy, having discrimination enough to see that it was one thing to refer the atrocities of the reign of terror to the political principles of the perpetrators, and quite another to ascribe them to their avowed and unblushing atheism. But the crimes that he imputed to Mr. Hall, were, that he was "an imitator of Mr. Burke," that he was "fierce and even savage in expression," that his "charges against atheism are unfounded," and that he taught "that it was excusable, if not meritorious, to punish men for errors in religious opinions!" For himself, he maintained, that "all men are essentially alike in moral conduct;" that the sum of all the morality of religionists is, "do good unto the household of faith, and to them only; kill, plunder, calumniate the heretics;" that "all public religions are opposed to all private morality;" that "atheism (on the contrary) tends but little to alter our moral sentiments;" and that "all religions except the belief that rewards are to be conferred upon the beneficent, and for that service exclusively, are not merely as bad, but *infinitely worse than any kind or degree of scepticism*;" because "atheism leaves every human present motive *in full force*, whilst every religion or mode of faith different from what is above expressed, changes the name and the nature of morality, saps the foundations of all benevolence, and introduces malice, hostility, and murder, *under the pretext of love to God*." * This being

* Since the first publication of this Memoir, I have learnt, what justice to Mr. Anthony Robinson requires me to state, that, after a few

a fair specimen of the shameless impiety with which the press then teemed, we need not wonder at the applauses bestowed upon Mr. Hall, for advancing with such singular talent and ability to stem the torrent.

With the exception of a few letters from private friends, who disapproved of his denominating the Roman Catholic clergy "the Christian priesthood," every communication he received was highly gratifying, especially as it did justice to his motives. The most distinguished members of the University were loud in his praises: numerous passages in the sermon which were profound in reasoning, or touching and beautiful in expression, were read and eulogized in every college and almost every company; and the whole composition was recommended in the charges and sermons of the dignified and other clergy in terms of the warmest praise. The "Monthly Review" (then the leading critical journal), the "British Critic" (at that time under the able superintendence of Dr. Nares), and other Reviews, gave to the sermon the highest commendation. Kett in his "Elements of General Knowledge," William Belsham in his "History of Great Britain," Dr. Parr in the notes to his

years, his sentiments underwent some important changes, and he bitterly lamented his acrimonious attack upon Mr. Hall and his principles. He invariably expressed himself in the warmest terms of admiration of his talents as a preacher and author, and of veneration of his excellencies as a man. He characterized him as the most eloquent man in Britain after the death of Burke; and, on one occasion, when speaking to Mr. S. J. Button, a son of the late Rev. W. Button, of Mr. Hall, on adverting to his own treatment of him, he burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Robert Hall is not only one of the greatest, but the best of men." In a letter to the same gentleman, dated January, 1818, he says, "amongst *writers* in the class of divines, Bishop Jeremy Taylor is the only man, who is at all, in the constituents of true eloquence, to be compared to Mr. Hall." "Why is he not placed in the most conspicuous situation that the Dissenters have to give? Do they not know that his equal in public qualifications exists not in the kingdom? And amongst their numerous ministers, there is not one of severer virtue. He has had dreadful sufferings; may God grant that uninterrupted comfort may attend him to the close of life, and that every blessing may be the portion of his family." Mr. Hall, I understand, was informed of this change, and expressed much gratification that the most scornful and contemptuous of his opponents, had seen his error, and become his friend. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

celebrated "Spital Sermon," and many others, were profuse in their expressions of panegyric. From that time Mr. Hall's reputation was placed upon an eminence, which it will probably retain as long as purity and elevation of style, deeply philosophical views of the springs and motives of action, and correct theological sentiments, are duly appreciated in the world.*

Of the letters received by Mr. Hall on this occasion, the following from the pen of his friend Mackintosh, has escaped the ravages of time.

"*Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn,*
"26 *March,* 1800.

"Dear Hall,

"From the enclosed letter, you will see the opinion "which the Bishop of London† has formed of your sermon,

* That the reader may be put in possession of what was most interesting in the panegyrical notices to which I have above alluded, I shall insert the substance of two reviews written by Sir Jas. Mackintosh, and of the often-cited note of Dr. Parr, neither of which is now easily attainable, in a note at the end of this Memoir. See Note B. Appendix.

On the publication of Dr. Parr's "Spital Sermon," I took a copy of it to Mr. Hall; and sat down at his table while he hastily turned over the leaves. He was greatly amused by the cursory examination, but had evidently no expectation that any of the notes referred to himself. "What a profusion of Greek, Sir! Why, if I were to write so, they "would call me a pedant; but it is all natural in Parr." "What a "strange medley, Sir. The gownsmen will call him *Farrago Parr*." At length I saw his eye glance upon the notes which relate to himself. His countenance underwent the most rapid changes, indicating surprise, regret, and pity: in a very few minutes he threw down the book, and exclaimed, "Poor man! poor man! I am very sorry for him! He is "certainly insane, Sir! Where were his friends, Sir? Was there no-"body to sift the folly out of his notes, and prevent its publication? "Poor man!"

If Dr. Parr's admiration of Mr. Hall indicated insanity, it continued to show itself until his death; for in his Will he says, 'I bequeath a mourning ring to the Rev. Robert Hall, as a mark of my reverence for his exemplary virtues, and of my admiration of his sublime and hallowed eloquence.'

† Dr. Porteus. This enclosure is not now extant. A few months afterwards, Mr. Hall visited the bishop at Fulham, and shortly after his return to Cambridge, he received a copy of Kennicott's Hebrew Bible, two vols., folio, in the first of which the bishop had inscribed this testimony in his own hand: "These volumes are presented as an appropriate intimation of that applause, veneration, and gratitude, that are due to the acute detector, perspicuous impugner, and victorious antagonist, of the sceptical, infidel, and anti-christian sophists of the present times."

"and you will observe that he does some justice to your "merit. Mr. Archdeacon Eaton, to whom the letter was "written, has allowed me to send it to you; and I thought "it might not be disagreeable to you to have it, as the "opinion of a man, not indeed of very vigorous understand-"ing, but an elegant writer, a man of taste and virtue, not "to mention his high station in the church.

"I last night had a conversation about the sermon with a 'man of much greater talents, at a place where theological, 'or even literary discussions, are seldom heard. It was "with *Mr. Windham, at the Duchess of Gordon's rout.* I "asked him whether he had read it. He told me that he "had, that he had recommended it to every body; and, "among others, on that very day, to the new Bishop of "Bangor,* who had dined with him. He said that he was "exceedingly struck with the style, but still more with the "matter. He particularly praised the passage on vanity as "an admirable commentary on Mr. Burke's observations on "vanity in his character of Rousseau. He did not like it "the worse, he said, for being taken from the source of all "good, as he considered Mr. Burke's works to be. He "thought, however, that you had carried your attack on "vanity rather too far. He had recommended the sermon "to Lord Grenville, who seemed sceptical about any thing "good coming from the pastor of a Baptist congregation, "especially at Cambridge.

"This, you see, is the unhappy impression which Priest-"ley has made, and which, if you proceed as you have so "nobly begun, you will assuredly efface. But you will "never do all the good which it is in your power to do, "unless you assert your own importance, and call to mind "that as the Dissenters have no man comparable to you, it "is your province to guide them, and not to be guided by "their ignorance and bigotry. I am almost sorry you "thought any apology due to those senseless bigots who "blamed you for compassion [towards] the clergy of France, "as innocent sufferers and as martyrs to the Christian faith "during the most barbarous persecution that has fallen upon "Christianity, perhaps since its origin, but certainly since "its establishment by Constantine. * * * " * * * * I own I thought "well of Horsley when I found him, in his charge, call "these unhappy men 'our Christian Brethren:' the bishops "and clergy of the persecuted church of France! This is "the language of truth. This is the spirit of Christianity.

* Dr. Cleaver.

"I met with a combination in Ovid, the other day, which "would have suited your sermon. Speaking of the human "descendants of the giants, he says—

> "Sed et illa propago
> "Contemptrix superûm, sævæque avidissima cædis
> "Et violenta fuit. Scires è sanguine natos."
>
> MET. I. 160.

"The union of ferocity with irreligion is agreeable to your "reasoning.

"I am going to send copies of my third edition* to Paley "and Watson, to Fox and the Lord Chancellor.† I should "like to send copies of your sermon with them. If you will "direct six copies to be sent here, I shall distribute them "in such a manner as will, I think, not be hurtful.

"Mrs. Mackintosh joins me in the most kind and respect-"ful remembrance. Believe me ever,

"Dear Hall,

"Your affectionate friend,

"JAMES MACKINTOSH."

Mr. Mackintosh continued to evince both the steadiness of his friendship for Mr. Hall, and the high value which he set upon this Sermon, by frequently quoting it and applying it to the elucidation of the Lectures which he was then delivering in Lincoln's-Inn. Several of his auditors were, in consequence, induced sometimes to spend their Sundays at Cambridge, that they might listen to the pulpit instructions of the individual of whom they had heard so much. Many also of the members of the University, including not merely under-graduates, but college fellows and tutors, were often seen at the Baptist place of worship. These sometimes amounted to fifty or sixty: and a few of them attended so constantly upon the afternoon service that they became almost regarded as regular hearers. Among the latter, some have since become distinguished men, and occupy important stations either in the church or in the public service, as statesmen or senators.

The attendance of so many university students upon the services of a Dissenting Minister, at length began to

* Of the Discourse on the Study of the Law of Nature and Nations.

† The Earl of Rosslyn.

excite alarm among the "Heads of Houses;" of whom a meeting was summoned to consider the expediency of interposing some authoritative measure to prevent this irregularity. But Dr. Mansel, then master of the largest college, Trinity, and afterwards Bishop of Bristol, "declared that he could not be a party in such a measure: he admired and revered Mr. Hall, both for his talents and for his genuine liberality; he had ascertained that his preaching was not that of a partisan, but of an enlightened minister of Christ; and therefore if he were not the Master of Trinity he should certainly often attend himself; and that even now he had experienced a severe struggle before he could make up his mind to relinquish so great a benefit." Shortly after this he personally thanked Mr. Hall, not only for his sermon, but for his general efforts in the Christian cause; and through the medium of a common friend, endeavoured to induce him to enter the established church. This, I believe, was the only *direct* attempt to persuade Mr. Hall to conform.

None of these circumstances were permitted to draw Mr. Hall aside from his ordinary course. His studies, his public duties, his pastoral visits, were each assigned their natural place, as before. If there were any change, it was manifest in his increased watchfulness over himself, and perhaps, in giving a *rather* more critical complexion than before to certain portions of his morning expositions, and in always concluding them with such strong practical appeals as might be suited to a congregation of mixed character.*

If I do not greatly mistake, however, his sentiments with regard to controversy in general were considerably modified from this period. The language of the preface to his sermon, on the advantages of union, was in truth the language of his heart and conduct; so that he

* By this time Mr. Hall's character for orthodoxy had become so completely established, that he was invited, on his visits to London, to preach for the Rev. Abraham Booth, a rigid investigator of the claims of all whom he admitted to his pulpit. On these occasions, the excellent John Newton, Mr. Gunn, and other pious clergymen residing in London, gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of hearing him preach.

abstained from public discussions except on questions that seemed of vital importance, either in regard to fundamental truth, or the essential privileges of christians. Having learnt that one of the severest trials of human virtue is the trial of controversy, he resolved, on occasions when silence became inexpedient or censurable, not to repel even injustice and misrepresentation in an angry spirit. Thus when he undertook the refutation of Bishop Horsley's charge, that village preachers among methodists and dissenters were teachers of insubordination and sedition, indignant as he doubtless felt at so unjust an insinuation, he opposed it in a manner as remarkable for the conciliatory spirit which it exhibits, as for the singular train of original thought, and cogent argument, which runs through that interesting fragment.*

In little more than two years after the publication of the sermon on Modern Infidelity, Mr. Hall again appeared before the public as an author. The transient peace of Amiens was celebrated by a general thanksgiving throughout England on the 1st of June, 1802. In the sermon preached by Mr. Hall on that occasion, he endeavoured first to awaken the gratitude of his auditors by a most touching picture of the horrors of war, from which Europe had just escaped; and then to apply the gratitude so excited, to acts of benevolence. I have adverted in another place to Mr. Hall's reasons for preaching that sermon *memoriter*, without deviation, from his own written copy. I recur to it for a moment, merely to state that though it was delivered with a most impressive dignity, and with less rapidity than that to which he usually yielded himself, yet, in one or two parts, he obviously felt great difficulty in checking his inclination either to modify his language, or to expatiate more at large. This was especially observable at the passage commencing with "Conceive but for a moment the consternation which the approach of an invading army "would impress on the peaceful villages in this neigh"bourhood." He mentioned afterwards, that the strug-

* That on Village preaching, commenced in 1801, and published in Vol. VI. of this collection.

gle between his desire to correct what he, just then, saw was "a confusion in the grouping," and his determination "not to deviate from his lesson," was such as rendered it almost impossible for him to proceed. To this kind of perplexity he never again exposed himself.

The nation had scarcely tasted the blessings of peace, when a dispute on one of the articles of the treaty of Amiens involved us in a fresh war with the French. Buonaparte, then First Consul, aware of the British ascendency at sea, resolved first to attack our continental dominions. He, also, seized on the persons and property of the numerous English who had visited France during the brief interval of peace, detaining them as prisoners of war; and then menaced this country with invasion. So strange, and in some respects, so atrocious a commencement of hostilities, had a singular effect in melting down dissension, and diffusing a spirit of almost unexampled unanimity, among all ranks and classes of the community. To adopt Mr. Hall's emphatic language on that occasion: "It was a struggle for existence, not "for empire. It must surely be regarded as a happy "circumstance that the contest did not take this shape "at an earlier period, while many were deceived by certain specious pretences of liberty into a favourable opinion of our enemy's designs. The popular delusion had "passed; the most unexampled prodigies of guilt had dispelled it; and, after a series of rapine and cruelty, *had* "*torn from every heart the last fibres of mistaken partiality.*" At this momentous period Mr. Hall's love of his country was again signally evinced. The same high appreciation of the value of liberty, which in early life led him to defend the British constitution from the evils to which he then thought it exposed, led him on this occasion to excite his countrymen to oppose the assaults of one whom he regarded as the greatest despot of modern times, and to imprint on their minds "a deep abhorrence of his perfidy and cruelty." On the fast day, 19th October, 1803, he preached at Bristol, where he was then on a visit, a sermon afterwards published, "The Sentiments proper to the Present Crisis," which had the happiest effect in

enkindling the flame of generous, active patriotism.

This sermon, perhaps, excited more general admiration than any of the author's former productions; on account of its masterly exposure of prevailing errors, its original and philosophical defence of some momentous truths, and its remarkable appropriateness to the exigencies of the crisis. The last ten pages were thought by many (and by Mr. Pitt, among the number) to be fully equal in genuine eloquence to any passage of the same length that can be selected from either ancient or modern orators. They were reprinted in various periodical publications, and widely circulated in every direction. Some exceptions were taken by a few persons, to a phrase or two, which were thought of a heathenish tendency; these he endeavoured to remove by a few explanatory remarks, inserted in the preface to the second and subsequent editions of the sermon.

In an old manuscript of Mr. Hall's, containing outline notes of sermons preached by him in 1801, 1802, and 1803, scarcely any of them occupying more than two pages, there is inserted the first rude sketch of this valuable sermon, and, at the distance of several pages, a few hints of thoughts and sentences designed to be introduced near the close.

"I. Particulars in which our notions are wrong, or, 'we "speak not aright,' with regard to national judgements.

"1. Political speculations on the secondary causes of our "calamities, exclusive of a regard to the hand of God.

"2. Wanton and indiscriminate censure of the conduct "of our rulers.

"We are permitted within . . . . . limits to animadvert on "the measures of government.

"3. A confidence in an arm of flesh.

"Cursed is man, &c.

"4. A reliance on our supposed superior virtue.

"5. General lamentations on the corruptions of the age.

"Right sentiments. An acknowledgement of the justice "and dominion of God.

"Sincere confession of our sins. Dan. ix. 8. Zech. x. 11, &c."

Such was the original synopsis. The hints intended to be worked in towards the close of the sermon, are as below.

"Eternal God! (O thou,) who hast at once declared thy-
"self the God of Peace and the Lord of Hosts, go forth with
"our armies, and shelter (shield) their heads in the day of
"battle: give them (endow them with) that undaunted
"courage, that . . . . . from trouble which springs from a
"sense of thy presence.

"Under thy conduct, and fighting under thy banners, we
"will employ all the resources which lie within our reach,
". . . . . without trusting in an arm of flesh . . . . . while we
"behold with the eye of faith, what thy prophet discerned
"in ancient times, the plains filled with horses of fire and
"chariots of fire.

"There is surely not one person here who will tempt
"himself to . . . . . by the fear of death, when he reflects
"that, in the failure of this great enterprise, should the cri-
"sis arrive, he must feel a thousand deaths in the extinction
"of religion, in the spoliation of property, in the violation
"of chastity, in the confusion of all orders . . . . . when all
"that is noble or holy will be trampled upon . . . . . when
"death would be sought with the avidity of . . . . . when the
"enemies' triumphs will be felt in . . . . . mourn . . . . . free-
"dom entombed."

I have here presented the incipient germs of thought and expression in this extraordinary production, from a persuasion that the man of research into the operations of intellect will be deeply interested on comparing them with their finished result, as exhibited in the complete sermon.

On looking back upon the preceding pages, I perceive that I shall have laid myself open to the charge of dwelling too long upon that portion of Mr. Hall's life during which I also resided at Cambridge. Let me simply observe, then, that it was the portion in which his fine character arose, by the means I have been tracing, to the place that he deserved in public estimation; and that I may be forgiven if I have thus dwelt upon that bright period of my own existence in which I was open to the constant influence of association with one so pre-eminent in mental and moral excellence. Yet I am not disposed to allow the interesting memory of a long friendship to interfere with biographical fidelity. I have spo-

ken of Mr. Hall's richer qualities agreeably to the estimate I then formed, but, with a conviction that they had not at that period reached their entire and mature developement. I shall now advert to a few of his defects, but with an equally strong persuasion that they diminished as his age, and judgement, and piety advanced.

I have already remarked that Mr. Hall was impetuous in argument. I must here add that he *sometimes* contended more for victory than for truth. I never knew him voluntarily take what he believed to be the wrong side of an argument, for the sake of showing how adroitly he could carry on the advocacy of any opinions which he, for the moment, took the fancy to maintain; but, if ever he precipitated himself into the assertion of erroneous sentiment, he would strenuously defend his opinion; and, on such occasions, would seem more pleased with perplexing and confounding his opponents, than with faithfully endeavouring to set either them or himself right. This habit was very much restrained, if not altogether overcome, in the latter part of his life. Be it observed, however, that at no time did it tempt him to trifle with the sanctities of religion.

Besides this yielding to the temptation of making the matter of truth and error a prize for contest, there was another thing which, in social life, depreciated the *practical* value of his great ability, namely, a random carelessness in throwing out opinions and estimates of subjects, books, or men. Many of those opinions were graphically correct, and highly valuable, and they were usually clothed in an aphorismatic terseness of language; yet, were too often such, that plain, credulous listeners for instruction, regarding him as an oracle, would leave him with incorrect and fallacious notions of the topics on which he had spoken, and would, therefore, be strangely perplexed two or three weeks afterwards, on hearing, or hearing reported, contrary opinions on the same subjects stated by him subsequently, when farther investigation had corrected his judgement. Sometimes, too, especially when indulging in panegyric, he would, even in conversation, give himself up to the feelings of the

orator, and allow his fancy to escape into the *ideal*, sketching the picture then existing in his own thoughts, rather than that of the individual whom he imagined himself describing.

It was also much to be regretted, that when he was in company he did not keep habitually in view the good which his great talents and high character qualified him to impart. His conversation, though always conveying information on the various subjects generally brought forward in cultivated society, did not indicate the prevailing purpose of leading the minds of others in a right direction. Or, if he entered society with this determination, he frequently permitted the circumstances into which he was thrown, to divert him from his purpose, thus giving away his admirable conversational powers to the mere casual train of topics, many of them trivial in interest. There could not but be various acute remarks, and every now and then a piece of valuable disquisition, or a most important sentiment, or an eloquent flow of striking observations; yet there was not a systematic bearing toward positive utility. Often, indeed, has Mr. Hall lamented this defect: often, as we have been returning from a party which he had kept alive by the brilliancy and variety of his observations, has he said, "Ah! Sir, I have again contributed to the loss of an "evening, as to everything truly valuable: go home with "me, that we may spend at least one hour in a manner "which becomes us."

It should be added, however, that it was only in larger parties that this occurred. I never spent an evening with him alone, or with the addition of one or two select companions, in which the sublimer purposes of religious as well as intellectual intercourse were not prevailingly kept in view.

In adverting to the deficiencies in Mr. Hall's character, I must farther remark, that he did not always seem adequately alive to *special* modes and efforts of utility. There were times when his apparent indifference must have been thought scarcely compatible with his uniform benevolence and piety, unless by the few who were tho-

roughly aware that his infirmities frequently compelled him to avoid active exertions, except those which fell within the range of ministerial duty: yet, at other seasons, he exerted himself so powerfully and successfully in favour of some grand object, as, in great measure, to compensate for his habitually avoiding the ordinary detail of minor operations.

His defects, on whatever occasions they showed themselves, were as remote as possible from littleness, and were such as would be most naturally found in a noble character. We may hence learn, however, that a man, though far enriched above his fellows with intellectual and spiritual endowments, still manifests the frailties of a fallen being; and that it always behoves us, therefore, with Christian discrimination, to distinguish between grace and nature, to give to God his own glory, and to refer to men their own infirmities.

But I must return from this digression. During the early months of the year 1803, the pain in Mr. Hall's back increased, both in intenseness and continuity, depriving him almost always of refreshing sleep, and depressing his spirits to an unusual degree. For some time he seriously contemplated the dissolution of his connexion with his flock; and retiring into one of the most secluded spots which he could select in Devonshire. But on one of his visits to Kettering, he consulted Dr. Kerr of Northampton, who recommended him not to relinquish his official duties, but to reside a few miles from Cambridge, and to have recourse to horse exercise. In consequence of this advice, he took a house at Shelford, a village about five miles from Cambridge; and the frequent and short journeys on horseback which thus became necessary, for a season seemed beneficial. Yet, the advantage was not of long continuance. He missed his delightful evenings spent in the society of the intelligent classes of the congregation (of whom there was a much higher proportion than in most congregations), and he missed still more, the simple, heart-refreshing remarks of the poor of his flock, whose pious converse had always been peculiarly soothing to his mind. It is true, he

there enjoyed intercourse with two excellent men, both of whom he cordially esteemed, the late Mr. James Nutter, a valuable member of his church at Cambridge, and the Rev. Thomas Thomason, afterwards much distinguished as one of the East India Company's chaplains at Calcutta.* With these friends he sometimes spent his evenings; and in company with the latter, who was Mr. Simeon's curate at Trinity Church, he frequently rode to Cambridge on the Sunday mornings; these brothers in the gospel ministry proceeding thus pleasantly, "in the "unity of the spirit," to their respective spheres of labour in the church of God. Gratifying, however, as this intercourse was, both to Mr. Hall, and his valued neighbours, it still left him too much alone, and too much exposed to all the morbid influences of a disordered body, and of a mind overstrained. Often has he been known to sit close at his reading, or yet more intensely engaged in abstract thought, for more than twelve hours in the day; so that, when one or both of his kind friends have called upon him, in the hope of drawing him from his solitude, they have found him in such a state of nervous excitement, as led them to unite their efforts in persuading him to take some mild narcotic, and retire to rest. The painful result may be anticipated. This noble mind lost its equilibrium; and he, who had so long been the theme of universal admiration, now became the subject of as extensive a sympathy. This event occurred in November, 1804. Mr. Hall was placed under the care of Dr. Arnold, of Leicester, whose attention, with the blessing of God, in about two months, restored him both to mental and bodily health.

During this afflictive suspension of his pastoral duties, his church and congregation gave the most unequivocal proofs that they had caught somewhat of his generous and exalted spirit, and that they were desirous to conduce to his welfare in temporal things, in acknowledgement of the spiritual blessings he had been the means of conveying to them. They set on foot a subscription, to

* Memoirs of his life have been recently published, by Mr. Sargent, the esteemed biographer of Henry Martyn.

which themselves contributed most liberally, and which, by the aid of other friends, became sufficient to produce, besides a life annuity of one hundred pounds, a farther sum nearly equal, vested in government securities, the latter to be at his own disposal at death: each sum being properly vested in trustees.*

In April, 1805, he resumed his ministerial functions at Cambridge: but, it being deemed inexpedient for him to re-occupy his house at Shelford, he engaged another at Foulmire, about nine miles from Cambridge. This spot, doubtless, was unwisely selected; as his opportunities of social intercourse with old and intimate friends were almost entirely cut off, and he was thus left to feed more upon his own thoughts than in any preceding part of his life. The evil did not show itself in his public ministrations, which were regarded as more devout, intellectual, and impressive, than they had ever been; nor in any diminution of relish for works in which genius stood forth in defence of religious truth;—as his exquisite critique upon Foster's Essays, written at this period, and now republished, amply evinces. But the evils resulting from solitude and a return of his old pain with more than its usual severity, ere long began to show themselves. Sleepless nights, habitual exclusion from society, a complete self-absorption, and the incessant struggle between what was due to a church and congregation which had given such signal proofs of affection for him, and what he felt to be necessary for his own preservation, a speedy removal from air and scenery that more and more impaired his health and oppressed his spirits: these, in about twelve months after his former attack at Shelford, produced a recurrence of the same malady, which again laid him aside from public duty.

He soon, however, recovered the complete balance of his mental powers, under the judicious care of the late Dr. Cox, of Fish Ponds, near Bristol. Still it was regarded as essential to the permanent possession of mental health and vigour, that he should resign the pastoral office at Cambridge, in order that he might, for a year, at

* See farther, a note to Letter 18, published in this volume.

least, seek retirement in a spot selected and cordially approved by himself, abstain from preaching, and, as far as possible, avoid all strong excitement.

Pursuant to this advice, he sent in his letter of resignation, which, with that from the church, in reply, is inserted in the present volume.

Thus terminated a connexion which had subsisted for fifteen years, and had been of great benefit to Mr. Hall's character; while, by the divine blessing upon his labours, it had transformed a society that was rapidly sinking under the influence of cold, or disputatious, speculators, into a flourishing church and congregation, "bringing forth the fruits of righteousness," and shining in the lustre of a consistent christian profession. It is pleasing to remark that the attachment on both sides remained undiminished until Mr. Hall's death.

On recovering from this attack, he received a letter from his old friend Sir James Mackintosh, then Recorder of Bombay, which was written soon after Sir James had heard of his first indisposition. It is highly interesting, both as a memorial of genuine friendship, and as a beautiful exhibition of elevated and delicate sentiment. My insertion of it will not, however, be regarded as a proof that I entirely adopt the *theory* which the writer so elegantly sketched.

Bombay, Sept. 21st, 1805.

"My Dear Hall,

"I believe that, in the hurry of leaving England, I did "not answer the letter which you wrote to me in December, "1803. I did not, however, forget your interesting young "friend,* from whom I have had one letter from Constan-

* This "interesting young friend," was the celebrated *Claudius James Rich*, to whose valuable researches in Babylon, Koordistan, &c., the world is so much indebted. He was born in March 1787, at Dijon, in France, but was taken, while yet an infant, to Bristol. At 15 years of age his extraordinary attainments in Hebrew, Syriac, Persian, Arabic, and other eastern languages, attracted the attention of Mr. Hall, Sir Charles Williams, and other eminent men. He married Sir James Mackintosh's eldest daughter, and shortly afterwards took up his abode at Bagdad, as British Resident. His industry and research were quite extraordinary. His MSS. are probably the most extensive

" tinople, and to whom I have twice written at Cairo, where " he now is. No request of *yours* could, indeed, be lightly " esteemed by me.

" It happened to me a few days ago, in drawing up " (merely for my own use) a short sketch of my life, that I " had occasion to give a faithful statement of my recollec- " tion of the circumstances of my first acquaintance with " you. On the most impartial survey of my early life, I " could see nothing which tended so much to excite and " invigorate my understanding, and to direct it towards " high, though, perhaps, scarcely accessible objects, as my " intimacy with you. Five-and-twenty years are now past " since we first met; yet hardly any thing has occurred " since, which has left a deeper or more agreeable impres- " sion on my mind. I now remember the extraordinary " union of brilliant fancy with acute intellect which would " have excited more admiration than it has done, if it had " been dedicated to the amusement of the great and the " learned, instead of being consecrated to the far more noble " office of consoling, instructing, and reforming the poor and " the forgotten.

" It was then too early for me to discover that extreme " purity, which in a mind pre-occupied with the low reali- " ties of life, would have been no natural companion of so " much activity and ardour, but which thoroughly detached " you from the world, and made you the inhabitant of re- " gions where alone it is possible to be always active with- " out impurity, and where the ardour of your sensibility had " unbounded scope amidst the inexhaustible combinations " of beauty and excellence.

" It is not given to us to preserve an exact medium. " Nothing is so difficult as to decide how much ideal models " ought to be combined with experience; how much of the " future should be let into the present, in the progress of " the human mind. To ennoble and purify, without raising " us above the sphere of our usefulness; to qualify us for " what we ought to seek, without unfitting us for that to " which we must submit; are great and difficult problems, " which can be but imperfectly solved.

" It is certain the child may be too manly, not only for " his present enjoyments, but for his future prospects. Per- " haps, my good friend, you have fallen into this error of

and valuable ever brought together by any private person in the East; and his collection of coins, gems, and precious stones was very rich. He died of cholera at Shiraz, October 5, 1820.

" superior natures. From this error has, I think, arisen that " calamity with which it has pleased Providence to visit " you; which, to a mind less fortified by reason and reli- " gion, I should not dare to mention, but which I really " consider in you as little more than the indignant struggles " of a pure mind with the low realities which surround it,— " the fervent aspirations after regions more congenial to it " —and a momentary blindness, produced by the fixed con- " templations of objects too bright for human vision. I may " say, in this case, in a far grander sense than that in which " the words were originally spoken by our great poet,

———————————‘ And yet
‘ The light which led astray was light from heaven.’

" On your return to us, you must surely have found con- " solation in the only terrestrial produce which is pure and " truly exquisite; in the affections and attachments you " have inspired, which you were most worthy to inspire, " and which no human pollution can rob of their heavenly " nature. If I were to prosecute the reflections, and in- " dulge the feelings, which at this moment fill my mind, I " should soon venture to doubt, whether, for a calamity de- " rived from such a source, and attended with such consola- " tion, I should so far yield to the views and opinions of " men, as to seek to condole with you. But I check my- " self, and I exhort you, my most worthy friend, to check " your best propensities, for the sake of attaining their ob- " ject. You cannot live *for* men without living *with* them. " Serve God, then, by the active service of men. Contem- " plate more the good you *can* do than the evil you can " only lament. Allow yourself to see the loveliness of virtue " amidst all its imperfections; and employ your moral ima- " gination, not so much by bringing it into contrast with the " model of ideal perfection, as in gently blending some of " the fainter colours of the latter with the brighter hues of " real experienced excellence; thus heightening their beauty, " instead of broadening the shade which must surround us " till we awake from this dream in other spheres of exis- " tence.

" My habits of life have not been favourable to this train " of meditation. I have been too busy or too trifling. My " nature perhaps would have been better consulted if I had " been placed in a *quieter* station, where speculation might " have been my business, and visions of the fair and good

"my chief recreation. When I approach you, I feel a powerful attraction towards this which seems the natural destiny of my mind; but habit opposes obstacles, and duty calls me off, and reason frowns on him who wastes that reflection on a destiny independent of him, which he ought to reserve for actions of which he is the master.

"In another letter I may write to you on miscellaneous subjects; at present I cannot bring my mind to speak of them. Let me hear from you soon and often.

'Farewell, my dear friend:

"Yours ever most faithfully,

"James Mackintosh."

Two visitations of so humiliating a calamity within the compass of a year deeply affected Mr. Hall's mind. Happily, however, for himself and for the world, his spirits soon recovered their wonted tone; and the permanent impression on his character was exclusively religious. His own decided persuasion was that, however vivid his convictions of religious truth, and of the necessity of a consistent course of evangelical obedience had formerly been, and however correct his doctrinal sentiments during the last four or five years, yet that he did not undergo a thorough transformation of character, a complete renewal of his heart and affections, until the first of these seizures. Some of his Cambridge friends, who visited him at Shelford, previously to his removal to Dr. Arnold's, and witnessed his deep prostration of soul while he read the fifty-first psalm, and made each verse the subject of penitent confession and of a distinct prayer, were rather inclined to concur with him as to the correctness of the opinion. Be this, however, as it may (and the wonderful revelations of "the great day" can alone remove the doubt), there can be no question that from this period he seemed more to live under the prevailing recollection of his entire dependence upon God, that his habits were more devotional than they had ever before been, his spiritual exercises more fervent and more elevated.

In a letter written to his friend Mr. Phillips, of Clapham, after his recovery, he thus adverts to his afflictions:

"I cannot look back upon the events which have befallen "me, without admiration and gratitude. I am a monument "of the goodness and of the severity of God. My sufferings "have been extreme, and the kindness of God, in interposing "in my behalf, unspeakable. Pray for me, my dear friend, "that I may retain an indelible sense of the mercies received, "and that the inconceivable afflictions I have undergone "may 'work for me the peaceable fruits of righteousness.' "I am often afraid lest it should be with me as with the "ancient Israelites, who, after they had sung the praises of "God, 'soon forgot his works.' O! that a life so signally "redeemed from destruction, may be as signally employed "in that which is alone the true end of life, the service of "God. But my heart is 'like a deceitful bow,' continually "prone to turn aside; so that nothing but the powerful im-"pulse of divine grace can fix it in a right aim."

At this time, I believe, Mr. Hall, under the persuasion to which I have just alluded, made a solemn dedication of himself to God, renewing the act annually on the recurrence of his birth-day. One of these touching and impressive records, which has been found among his papers, will, I feel assured, be read with deep interest.

"An Act of solemn Dedication of myself to God.

"O Lord, thou that searchest the heart and triest the "reins of the children of men. be thou the witness of "what I am now about, in the strength of thy grace, to "attempt: that grace I humbly and earnestly implore, "to give validity and effect to that act of solemn engage-"ment of myself to thy service, on which I am about to "enter. 'Thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins "are none of them hid from thee.' 'I was born in sin, "and in iniquity did my mother conceive me.' I am an "apostate, guilty branch of an apostate guilty root, and "my life has been a series of rebellions and transgres-"sions, in which I have walked according to the course "of this world; according to the Prince of the power of "the air, the '*spirit that now worketh in the children of* "*disobedience.*' How shall I confess my transgressions "before thee; what numbers can reach; what words

"can adequately express them! '*My iniquities have* "*increased over my head, and my transgressions have* "*grown up unto Heaven.*' O Lord, I esteem it a won-"derful mercy that I have not long since been cut off in "the midst of my sins, and been sent to hell before I "had an opportunity or a heart to repent. Being as-"sured from the word of God of thy gracious and mer-"ciful nature, and of thy willingness to pardon and "accept penitent believing sinners on the ground of the "blood and righteousness of thine own adorable Son, "'who died, the just for the unjust, to bring them to "God,' and that 'him that cometh to him he will in no-"wise cast out,' I do most humbly prostrate myself at "the footstool of his cross, and through him enter into "thy covenant. I disclaim all right to myself from "henceforth, to my soul, my body, my time, my health, "my reputation, my talents, or any thing that belongs "to me. I confess myself to be the property of the "glorious Redeemer, as one whom I humbly hope he "has redeemed by his blood to be part of 'the first "fruits of his creatures.'

"I do most cheerfully and cordially receive him in all "his offices, as my Priest, my Prophet, and my King. "I dedicate myself to him, to serve, love, and trust in "him as my life and my salvation to my life's end.

"I renounce the Devil and all his works, the flesh, "and the world, with heartfelt regret that I should have been enslaved by them so long. I do solemnly and "deliberately take thee to be my full and satisfying "good, and eternal portion, in and through thine ador-"able Son the Redeemer, and by the assistance of the "blessed Spirit of all grace, the third person in the "triune God, whom I take to be my Sanctifier and "Comforter to the end of time, and through a happy "eternity; praying that the Holy Spirit may deign to "take perpetual possession of my heart, and fix his abode "there.

"I do most solemnly devote and give up myself to the "Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, agreeably to the "terms of the Gospel covenant, and in humble expecta-

"tion of the blessings it ascertains to sincere believers. "I call thee to witness, O God! the truth and reality of "this surrender of all I have, and all I am, to thee; and, "conscious of the unspeakable deceitfulness of my heart, "I humbly and earnestly implore the influence of thy "Spirit to enable me to stand stedfast in this covenant, "as well as an interest in the blood of thy Son, that I "may be forgiven in those instances (alas! that such an "idea should be possible,) in which I may, in any de-"gree, swerve from it.

"Done this [2d] day of May, 1809, seven o'clock in "the evening, Leicester.

"ROBERT HALL."

Mr. Hall, on his removal from Dr. Cox's, spent some months among his relatives and friends in Leicestershire. At Arnsby he retraced the scenes of his youth, often visited the grave-yard, which would naturally awaken many interesting recollections of his early life, and on these occasions he has more than once been seen kneeling at his father's grave engaged in earnest prayer. He afterwards resided, for a time, at Enderby, a pleasant and sequestered village, five miles from Leicester, where, by the united influence of calm retirement and gentle spontaneous occupation, he gradually regained his bodily health, with great mental tranquillity, and a renewed capacity for usefulness in the church.

His friends, Dr. Ryland and Mr. Fuller, persuaded of the benefits that would flow from drawing his attention to a specific object, requested him to investigate the critical peculiarities of some difficult texts in the New Testament, respecting which Dr. Marshman had asked the opinion of his friends in England. This judicious application directed his thoughts to some of his old and favourite inquiries, and produced the most salutary effects.*

* For more than two years he employed much time in a critical examination of the New Testament, and in making and arranging such corrected translations as he deemed important, with short reasons for his deviating from the authorized version; intending to publish the whole in a pamphlet of about one hundred pages. Just as he had finished this work, he, for the first time, saw Macknight's new transla-

From this he passed to other literary occupations, (which he resumed with all the ardour and freshness of rejuvenescence) thence to closer biblical study, and, in due time, when his strength and self-possession were so restored as to permit the exertion without injury, he returned to the delightful work of "proclaiming the good tidings of peace." He was thus enabled to give ample evidence that "the splendour of his mind was wholly unimpaired; but, that, instead of bursting forth so frequently as before, like the lightning flash, it glowed with a mild and sober radiance, and gradually diffused around it the serenity of that peace which passeth understanding."

He first preached in some of the villages around him; and then, occasionally, to a small congregation assembling at a chapel in Harvey Lane, Leicester, which had several years before been under the care of that eminent man, Dr. Carey, of Serampore. The congregation had been diminishing for some years, and at this time did not exceed two hundred and fifty; the church consisted of seventy-six members. After having preached to them a few months, he accepted an invitation to become their stated pastor; and his ministerial labours were soon followed by tokens of good. "The people," said he, in a letter to Dr. Ryland, "are a simple-hearted, affectionate, "praying people, to whom I preach with more pleasure "than to the more refined audience at Cambridge. We "have had, through mercy, some small addition and "hope for more. Our meetings in general, our prayer "meetings in particular, are well attended."

tion of the Apostolic Epistles; and finding himself anticipated in some of the corrections which he thought most valuable, destroyed his manuscript. This I much regret, for in such of these notes as he read to me, he seemed, though often merely by slight changes in the version, suggested by a careful comparison of the synonyms in the Greek, to have thrown great light upon the sacred text.

His pursuits at this time rendering it desirable that he should possess copies of Walton's Polyglott, and of various other expensive works in different departments of biblical research, they were procured and sent to him by his relative and friend, the late Mr. Button, of Paternoster Row, with the assurance that he would not be expected to pay for them, until an improvement in his pecuniary circumstances made it perfectly convenient.

With this church he continued connected nearly twenty years. The church and congregation steadily increased during that long interval, and scarcely any thing of moment occurred to interrupt their internal peace. The place of worship, which, when Mr. Hall first settled there, would not conveniently hold four hundred persons, was enlarged in 1809 for the reception of about eight hundred; and in 1817 a second enlargement rendered it capable of accommodating a thousand persons. In 1826, at the close of Mr. Hall's labours there, the place was comfortably filled, and the members of the church, besides the members of the mixt-communion church, hereafter mentioned, and those who it is believed had gone to their eternal reward, amounted to nearly three hundred; of whom about two hundred and fifty had been baptized by Mr. Hall. More than a hundred of those who constituted the evening congregation were pious members of the church of England; and some of the neighbouring clergy frequently attended.*

* There are those who are so exclusively attached to their own ceremonial, its adjuncts and results, as to think that churchmen should conscientiously avoid entering a dissenting place of worship, and that it is especially censurable for a *clergyman* "to indulge even a casual temptation," though for the purpose of hearing the most eminent and excellent men. (See *Christian Observer*, Feb. 1833, p. 101.) I have also met with a very few individuals who have condemned Mr. Hall, for frequently listening to the pulpit instructions of Mr. Simeon, when he resided at Cambridge, and of Mr. Robinson, after he removed to Leicester. Persons with souls of this very slender calibre, with regard to genuine liberality of sentiment, have for some years been rapidly diminishing amongst the well-informed classes of pious men; and are still, I hope, decreasing, notwithstanding the violent collisions in the Christian world. Where the intellectual contraction is not so constitutionally fixed that cure is hopeless, I would venture to recommend serious meditation upon the two following passages from the writings of the elevated and noble-minded *John Howe.*

"You ought most frequently to attend on that which you find to be "most edifying to your own soul: as that should be your more ordinary "diet that best agrees with you. And that way, therefore, you must "most constantly adhere to, which is most grateful and savoury to you, "because you cannot so much edify by what you less relish. But your "judgement and latitude may well allow you *sometimes* to frequent "the assemblies with which you hold not constant communion. And "if so, it will also direct you thereto for a valuable end; as that you 'may signify you ordinarily decline them, not as *no Christians*, or

In March 1808, during Mr. Hall's residence at Enderby, his marriage, which had been in contemplation nearly twelve months, took place. This event gave great and sincere satisfaction to his old and intimate friends, most of whom had long regretted that one so evidently

"their worship as *no worship;* but as more defective or less edifying; "and that you may maintain love, and both express and beget a disposition to nearer union. For which, and all things that tend to make "us a happier people, *we must wait upon Him in whose hands are the "hearts of all men.*"—Humble Request to Conformists and Nonconformists.

"This may occasion some idle people to cry out, 'What! at church "in the forenoon, and at meeting-house in the afternoon? This is "fine! What will now become of our religion?' And what is already "become of his religion who so exclaims? Do the religion of the "church and of the [orthodox] meeting-house make two religions? "Wherein do they differ? The substance of the same religion is common to them both. Therefore the *modes and accidents* wherein "only they differ, are this man's religion. And can any man be the "better for such a religion, that consists of modes and accidents? 'Tis "true, that religion may possibly be so ludicrously disguised and misrepresented, as scarcely to be fitly owned for any religion at all. But "this cannot be said of most of the congregations of England, of either "sect. And they that have any thing of charity, or the fear of God, "about them, will be very wary how, for a misplaced word, or indecent action, or expression, they censure one or another of these "two sorts of solemn worshipping assemblies, as having nothing of God, "or of true religion among them."—*Considerations, &c., relating to Occasional Conformity.*

The spirit of this admirable writer, with regard to the more intimate association of protestants of different persuasions, seems to be far better comprehended and manifested in the American States, than by the writer whose cautionary remarks have occasioned this note: such, at least, appears a fair inference from the following facts.

"During my residence in the United States, I was frequently witness to the good understanding which generally, though, doubtless, "not universally, prevails among clergymen professing different opinions "on church forms, &c.......The two following I have preserved:— "The corner-stone of a new Baptist church was laid at Savannah in "Georgia, and the ceremonial services were performed by the clergymen of the Methodist, German, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, "and Baptist churches......The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was "administered in the Rev. Mr. Past's church (Presbyterian church at "Washington), and, *as usual,* all members of other churches in regular standing, were invited to unite with the members of that church, "in testifying their faith in, and love to, their Lord and Saviour. The "invited guests assembled round the table; and it so happened, that "Mr. Grundy, a senator from Tenessee, and two Cherokee Indians, "were seated side by side."—*Stuart's Three Years in North America,* Vol. I. p. 130.

formed for domestic enjoyments, should for so many years have lived without attaining them; and had no doubt, indeed, that an earlier marriage would, by checking his propensity to incessant retirement and mental abstraction, have preserved him from the heavy afflictions which had befallen him. As Mrs. Hall still lives to mourn the loss of her incomparable husband, I must not permit myself more than to testify how highly he estimated her kindness and affection, and how often, in his conversation, as well as in his letters, he expressed his gratitude to God for giving him so pious, prudent, and devoted a wife.* Of their five children, three daughters and one son survived. Another son died in 1814.† A few months after his marriage he removed to Leicester, the gradual increase in the number of his congregation, rendering it desirable that he should dwell amongst them, and associate with them as their pastor.

Mr. Hall's residence at Leicester was not only of longer continuance than at any other place, but I doubt not that it was the period in which he was the most happy, active, and useful. His domestic comfort at once contributed to a more uniform flow of spirits than he had for some time experienced, and greatly to the regularity of his habits. The increase both of attentive hearers, and of the number among them who were admitted to church-fellowship, supplied constant reason for encouragement and thankfulness. He was also within the reach of ministers and others, of different persuasions, men of decided piety, and some of them of considerable attainments, who knew how to appreciate the extraordinary advantages of frequent intercourse with such an individual; thus yielding him the delight of an inter-

* The late Mr. Morris, in that section of his "Biographical Recollections" which relates to this period, has, for want of correct information, fallen into great inaccuracies on some essential points. Yet, as the detail of facts can only be given by a total disregard of the feelings of survivors, it may suffice, if I affirm, from an acquaintance with circumstances and motives (at this period) more intimate than that of any other individual, that Mr. Hall, with reference to his marriage, proceeded in a manner fully consistent with the sentiments of honour, refinement, and delicacy, which uniformly characterised his conduct.

† See his letter to Mr. Phillips, No. 40 in this volume.

change of soul and sentiment, besides that fruit of friendship so aptly characterized by Lord Bacon:—"Whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another—he tosseth his thoughts more easily—he marshalleth them more orderly—he seeth how they look when they are turned into words—and he waxeth wiser than himself, often more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation."*

Leicester, from its situation in the heart of the midland counties, as well as from its importance in a leading inland manufacture, was the centre of influence and operation to a considerable distance around; and the concurrence of many favourable circumstances had rendered it the centre also of a religious influence, and of religious operations, diffusing themselves incessantly with a new and growing impulse. To this the zeal and activity of the late Rev. Thomas Robinson, of Leicester, and of Mr. Hall's father, had greatly contributed; and many clergymen and dissenting ministers in Leicestershire and the neighbouring counties, were in their respective fields of labour, instrumental in producing the most cheering and successful results. The attention of the Christian world had been recently invited, or, I might perhaps say, *summoned*, to promote the noble objects of Missionary Societies, Bible Societies, Sunday and other Schools for the instruction of the poor; and the summons had been obeyed in a universality and cordiality of vigorous Christian effort, and in a spirit of conciliation and harmony, such as the world had not yet known. Placed in the

* Mr. Hall, however, from the midway position of Leicester between London and the large towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire, was much exposed to interruptions. (See Letter, No. 77.) Many persons who had but a slight acquaintance with him, would invariably spend a day at Leicester, in their way from London to Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, &c., or from either of those places to London, that they might, during the greater part of it, enjoy his society; and, though he often found this to be a real annoyance, yet such was his feeling of what was due to strangers in point of courtesy, that it was not until he had sustained the inconvenience for almost twenty years, that he would consent that this class of visitors should be informed that he would not be at leisure to see them until evening.

midst of so extensive a sphere of benevolent and sacred influence, Mr. Hall was soon roused to a measure of activity and a diversity of employment to which he had hitherto been a stranger. The Bible Society at Leicester, Missionary Societies there and all around, asked and received his aid; and these, with the different public services of frequent occurrence among orthodox dissenters, gave occasion to the happiest exercise of his varied powers.

His religious character thus became correctly estimated by a much larger portion of the community. Instead of being known chiefly to men of reading and taste, as an author who had appeared before the world on a few momentous occasions, and, after a striking exhibition of intellectual and moral energy, had hastened back to his retirement, he now became much more known and revered as the correct and eloquent interpreter of the Christian faith, the intrepid asserter of its infinite superiority to all human systems of philosophy or morals. Long had he been admired by the intelligent as a great man; the circumstances in which he now moved with so much philanthropic ardour, caused him to be regarded, not merely by these, but by pious men of every persuasion, as a good man, rejoicing to consecrate his best faculties to the specific objects of the Christian ministry, and such purposes of enlarged exertion as were fully compatible with his holy calling.

Nor were these efforts, and this high estimate of their value, confined to the field of activity he thus occupied. He had, on quitting Bristol, in 1791, consented to spend a few weeks with his friends there, every two years. He had, also made a similar arrangement for visiting Cambridge, where the members of his former congregation had peculiar claims upon him. Although his invariable dread of notoriety, and his dislike of the bustle of the metropolis, caused his visits there to be "few and far between,"* yet they occurred sufficiently often to excite

* In 1812, several of Mr. Hall's old and valued friends, in conjunction with some men of rank and influence, who said "Mr. Hall must be sought out and brought out," laid a plan for his permanent settlement

almost universally the highest admiration of his singular qualities as a preacher, and to convince many who previously had contemplated the evangelical system of religion with great disrelish, that it was the *only* foundation of elevated morality, and that its cordial adoption was not necessarily repugnant to genius, learning, and intellectual cultivation.

Wherever he went, he was called to address overflowing congregations, and commonly of a remarkably mixed character. Churchmen and dissenters; men of rank and influence; individuals in lower stations; men of simple piety, and others of deep theological knowledge; men who admired Christianity as a beautiful system, and those who received it into the heart by faith; men in doubt, others involved in unbelief:—all resorted to the place where he was announced as the preacher. Frequently he was apprised of this peculiarity in the structure of his auditory, and, whenever that was the case, the striking appropriation of the sermons to the assembly was always manifest. Of this the reader will have ample evidence in the sermons inserted in the sixth volume of his Works, many of which were delivered on public occasions.*

Mr. Hall's writings during his residence at Leicester,

in London. The first step in the execution of this plan, his invitation to deliver a series of lectures in the metropolis, failed, partly in consequence of his ill health, and partly through his reluctance to appear in a prominent situation. See the letters 32, 33, 34.

* That the reader may not suspect I over-rate the impression made by Mr. Hall upon those who were not his intimates, nor had fully adopted his scheme of theology, I insert with others in Appendix, Note C, the late Mr. John Scott's elegant and discriminating sketch of his powers as a preacher and writer.

While this sheet was going through the press, I accidentally found among some old letters, one from a friend residing in France, in which there was the following allusion to Mr. Hall, by a French protestant clergyman, who was visiting Bristol in Sept. 1822. In a letter addressed to another protestant minister, Mr. Kerpezdron, of Aulnay, he says,

" I heard Mr. Robert Hall, of Leicester, last Tuesday morning; but
" his sermon was so great, so good, so eloquent, so simple, so pious, in
" a word, so complete a piece of pulpit oratory, that I cannot tell you
" any thing about it, except that it has made an indelible impression on
" my mind. I thought when I came out, that I never could preach
" again."

though by no means numerous, tended greatly to augment his influence upon society.

The first of these was published anonymously in the Eclectic Review, but left no room for hesitation as to its author. It was a critique upon a pamphlet entitled "Zeal without Innovation," which he undertook at the earnest entreaty of the late Mr. Robinson of Leicester, "who in common with all the serious clergy in those parts, disapproved the pamphlet highly."* As it is no part of my intention to present elaborate accounts of Mr. Hall's successive publications, it may suffice for me to remark, with regard to this critique, that while it places the controversy between the puritans and their opponents in a flood of light, and exhibits the essential importance of religious liberty to the growth, if not in some cases, to the existence, of genuine, devotional Christianity; it presents a more admirable picture of the character of the Evangelical Clergy,† a more powerful, liberal, and successful defence of their object and conduct, than has been, as yet, exhibited by any other person. Many regard it as among the most instructive and useful, as well as among the most masterly, of Mr. Hall's productions. It abounds in keen satire, in that dignified invective in which he so remarkably excelled, in irrefragable argument, in touching description, in tasteful imagery, in vehement and powerful appeals, and in sentiments of a weight and worth only to be fully estimated by men whose minds are elevated above the prejudices which tie us down to sects and parties, and can rejoice at the extension of true religion, among persons of any persuasion, or through the instrumentality of whomsoever the Great Head of the Church may employ. The value set by the public upon this disquisition, was evinced in the rapid sale of three editions, in a separate pamphlet, independently of its circulation in the Review.

Of the sermons published by Mr. Hall during his residence at Leicester, the first was preached in behalf of

* See letter 23.

† I use this term to avoid a periphrasis, and because it is intelligible and strictly characteristic.

the Sunday School connected with his own congregation, and appeared under the title of "The Advantages of Knowledge to the Lower Classes." The subject is not so adapted as many others to the decorations of eloquence; for the deplorable effects of ignorance and the blessings of knowledge are perhaps best exhibited in the detail of facts which scarcely admit of embellishment. Yet Mr. Hall's desire to enlarge the capacity for enjoyment among the lower classes, as well as to promote their highest welfare, tempted him to enter this region of common-places, and thus gave a fresh opportunity of showing how an original thinker can communicate an air of freshness to a worn-out topic, bring up to the surface arguments and illustrations that lie far below the reach of ordinary reasoners, and enforce them with a warmth and energy calculated equally to impress and to convince.*

The two next sermons are of a much higher order. One of them, on "The Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister," was addressed to the Rev. James Robertson, on his ordination over the Independent Church at Stretton, Warwickshire; the other, which portrays the duties, discouragements, and supports "of the Christian Missionary," was addressed to the Rev. Eustace Carey, on his designation as a missionary to India. In these the author traces with a master hand the various sources of discouragement and consolation, which appertain to the respective offices of the minister and the missionary. Like one intimately acquainted with comparative anatomy, he exhibits the points of

* This Sermon, as well as his two able pamphlets on the "Framework Knitter's Fund," and in "Reply to Cobbett and others," should be regarded as flowing entirely from his benevolence. This, with him, had never been a fleeting sentiment in occasional operation, but one that was permanently fed by Christian principles. It was however, greatly extended, to adopt his own language, "by those impressions of "tenderness, gratitude, and sympathy, which the endearments of domes-"tic life supply," and led him to investigate the actual circumstances of the neighbouring poor, and constantly to aim at the alleviation of their distress. Not long after his marriage, when his own pecuniary resources were much restricted, he proposed to fast on certain days that he might have it in his power to distribute more among the needy; and he thought it wrong to have more than two coats when so many persons around him were clothed in mere rags.

agreement, as well as those of diversity in the different subjects, with the most convincing discrimination; while conversant, as well with the morbid as the healthy anatomy of the subjects before him, he explores to its inmost recess, that universal moral disease which calls forth the efforts of both ministers and missionaries, and then (where the analogy must drop) he reveals the principles and the origin of an infallible cure. Both these addresses are remarkable for their originality and variety; every topic successively advanced is irradiated with eloquence, and glows with feeling; and so skilfully are both the discourses conducted, that, while they are avowedly directed to the minister and the missionary, and abound in the most valuable instructions to them respectively, the private Christian, who reads with devout attention, may derive from them as rich instruction for himself and as many directions for his own religious improvement, as though they were specifically addressed to him alone. This, indeed, was a decided characteristic of Mr. Hall's sermons. He who heard, or he who read, would find his astonishment and admiration strongly excited; but often, if not always, the more his emotion was enkindled by the preacher, the more forcibly was he compelled to retire into himself, and examine his own heart.

The sudden and untimely death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, was an event calculated to make the deepest impression upon a mind constituted like Mr. Hall's. The illustrious rank of the victim, her youth and recent marriage, the affecting nature of the catastrophe, its probable influence upon the reigning prince, upon the succession to the throne, and the welfare of the nation even to distant ages; all presented themselves to his thoughts with the most heart-stirring energy. He preached three sermons on the occasion, of which many of the auditors affirm, the one published was by no means the best. It, however, by universal acknowledgement, bore the palm above all the numerous valuable sermons that were then published. Stately, ornate, and solemn, it most strikingly accords with the event which called it forth. It embraces the various topics that would

occur to a man of piety, feeling, and excursive thought, on the contemplation of such an event,—the mysteriousness of God's providence, the vicissitudes of empires, the aggravated poignancy of sudden calamity to individuals of elevated station, " the uncertainty of life, the frailty " of youth, the evanescence of beauty, the nothingness of " worldly greatness," the blindness of man to futurity, " the human race itself withering" away, and the perpetuity of God's promises as the great and noble contrast to universal fragility;—these are touched in succession with the utmost tenderness, beauty, and sublimity. In felicity of diction, in delicacy and pathos, in the rich variety of most exquisite and instructive trains of thought, in their cogent application to truths of the utmost moment, in the skilful combination of what in eloquence, philosophy, and religion, was best calculated to make a permanent and salutary impression, this sermon probably stands unrivalled.

I have alluded thus concisely to a few of the sermons published by Mr. Hall while he was at Leicester, (and may also refer to most of those that are inserted in these Works) with a view of inviting the reader to consider what may be the probable influence of such a man in raising the standard of preaching in England; and to inquire next, whether it is not necessary that the standard should be raised, that ministers of every persuasion may be ready to meet the exigencies of the times in which we are thrown. I am well aware that some still remain among us who regard every thing beyond the common places and technicalities of theology, as a departure from " the simplicity that is in Christ;" and seem to apprehend even the truths of the gospel in danger, if he who advances them from the pulpit does not suppress all manifestations of intellectual greatness or cultivated taste.

Yet, assuredly, the Apostle Paul, though speaking and writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, did not hesitate to reason with extraordinary profundity and acumen, to embellish his compositions with quotations which proved his reading, and to excite emotion, in those

whom he addressed, by the most exquisite touches of tenderness and pathos. Both his epistles and oral addresses exhibit as remarkable as appropriate a variety in the manner of discussion and of application; and neither of them are ever dull, formal, or systematic.

Let me not be misunderstood to recommend any compromise with men of the world, by a partial concealment of the truth. Nor let me be supposed to doubt that the simplest exhibition of Christ as "the Saviour of sinners" from the guilt and thraldom of sin, has, during the whole previous history of the Christian dispensation, brought many "from the power of Satan unto God." Far from daring to question this, I delight in acknowledging it; and I rejoice that it has pleased God in such a multitude of instances, "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Yet, if I mistake not, we are living in a state of the church and of the world, in which the truth, to be defended efficaciously, must be defended by persons of deep thinking, of extensive knowledge, of sound discrimination, of warm and active spirits richly endowed with grace and wisdom from on high. Even political discussions, and the business of the legislature, become often so intimately blended with the concerns of religion, and so often involve the rights of men who make a profession of piety under different modifications, that upright legislators, to discharge their duty conscientiously, *must* investigate many important theological questions, to which their attention may have been hitherto scarcely ever called. In other directions, too, the current has evidently set in, and men of elevated intellect, and men of exalted station, as well as others, whether they wish it, or wish to escape it, will feel themselves compelled to decide either to "kiss the Son" while he is offered to them, or to reject him once for all, and suffer the wonderful machinery of God's eternal purposes to pursue its course and leave them for ever behind.

Is it quite consistent with the arrangements of ineffable wisdom and mercy, that the souls of such men shall never be touched by appropriate instruments, and that the repulsiveness of the gospel to the natural mind,

should, of necessity, be augmented by the incompetency of its ministers to engage attention?

The time too, if I mistake not again, has arrived when christianity receives more serious injury from its friends than from its enemies, at least, in this country. The active, restless mind of man, ever seeking after something new, falls into the temptation, with regard to religion, of being "wise beyond what is written." Hence, the world is required to receive forced interpretations of scripture, absurd and untenable dogmas, hasty and sweeping inferences from the most obscure passages; that is made most prominent of which scripture says the least, and the analogy of faith is perpetually violated. All this is done with an air of authority, and in a tone of discovery: some of the propounders of these crudities demand for them a cordial reception as a test for scriptural faith, and too often evince in their promulgation a spirit of intolerance, to which the protestant world has long been a stranger, and which, if pursued to its natural issue, would either sever the church into a number of infinitesimal sections, idly brandishing their weapons at each other, and of no force against the common enemy, or would reduce the exercise of private judgement to a nullity.

To prevent the farther growth of these monstrous evils, there must be brought into existence and operation, the clear results of discriminating research as to the essential truths in a system of reconciliation and restoration to the Divine image; they must be placed in a strong relief, so as to be at once distinguishable from fanciful speculation and from bold innovation, as well as to check the propensity to overstatement, which is the constant symbol of a raw theology. For these the wise and thoughtful look to an augmentation, among ministers of the gospel, of men "thoroughly furnished," by endowments human and divine; and I have an entire persuasion, that in infinite mercy, such will be vouchsafed to the world, and each rightly placed, and efficiently employed, in that mighty transformation which shall make "the wilderness blossom as the rose." But I must not dwell longer upon this subject.

Mr. Hall's known approbation of Sunday schools, and the excellency of his judgement as to matters of detail, when he gave his mind thoroughly to them, led to his often being consulted on points of difficulty. His sentiments on one of these points richly deserve general attention. A neighbouring clergyman,* having been urged to allow that the art of writing should be taught in his parish Sunday school, intreated Mr. Hall to give him his deliberate judgement on the question. This, in a short time, he returned in the following terms.

"INEXPEDIENCY OF TEACHING TO WRITE IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

"In considering this question, the obligation of a religious observance of the Lord's day must be assumed, as it is a principle not disputed among the parties whom this discussion concerns. I know not how a religious observance of the Lord's day can be defined but by saying, It is an exemption of it from every employment not strictly religious, works of the last necessity and mercy excepted.

"Now *writing*, it is undeniable, is not a religious employment, nor can learning to write be so denominated. It seems, therefore, to be excluded by the definition we have laid down. It is altogether a *secular* employment, which may occasionally be made subservient to the purposes of piety, as may every other attainment; but it partakes not of the nature of religion.

"Once break down the barrier between the sacred and civil employment of time, and the sanctity of the sabbath is violated; nor is it possible to know where to stop. A principle is broken in upon which is plain and determinable; nor will it be possible to assign any consistent reason for resisting a second or third encroachment, which will not equally prohibit the first. If the qualifying of persons for civil departments be alleged, other branches of knowledge, arithmetic for example, must be introduced; for there are abundance of situations where the

* The Rev. Edward Morgan, Vicar of Syston.

art of computation would not be less useful than that of writing. Thus Sunday-schools would become schools of general instruction, and the sanctification of the sabbath be completely lost sight of.

"When young persons have been sanctioned by their superiors in devoting a part of the sabbath to exercises of a purely secular nature, what shall restrain the more studious part of them, at a subsequent period, from pursuing grammar, geography, or arithmetic, on the Lord's day, which are as much connected with religion as the acquisition pleaded for? and when we recollect the tenacity of early impressions, and the tendency of depraved nature to a progressive deviation from rectitude, these and much greater evils may be expected to ensue.

"The relaxation of the rule contended for in the present instance, will naturally destroy in youthful minds a reverence for the sabbath; and thus one of the elements of impiety will be imbibed in a seminary established for religious instruction. The rules of duty are never successfully inculcated on children except in an absolute form; the limitations and occasional exceptions to which they are liable, are best left to be learned by subsequent experience and inquiry. Children are utterly incapable of comprehending nice and subtle distinctions; and a very refined one indeed is necessary to ascertain the difference in a moral view, betwixt teaching the art of writing and other branches of knowledge.

"I am aware of but one objection to which this reasoning is liable. It may be said that learning to read is no more a part of religion, than learning to write. But here lies an important difference. Though reading is not, in itself considered, a part of religion, it is a necessary instrument of religion. The word of God is not accessible without it. It is unquestionably the will of the Supreme Being that the sacred oracles should be perused, or they need not to have been imparted; but they cannot be perused by such as are ignorant of the art of reading; and the ordination of the end is always supposed to include the appointment of what is absolutely necessary to that end. Writing *may be* rendered subservient to

the promotion of piety; but it possesses this property only in common with every other acquisition. Reading *is essential* to any considerable acquaintance with the oracles of God. It is the key that unlocks the treasures of inspiration.

"All pious persons would be shocked to read an advertisement from a writing master, informing the public that his seminary would be open on the Lord's day. But surely the circumstance of his receiving a pecuniary recompence for his labour, creates no material difference in the two cases. He does that for reward which the persons I am opposing do gratuitously: but what it is wrong to do under the stimulus of a recompence, cannot become right in consequence of its being done voluntarily and spontaneously. If the action in question be right, it carries its own vindication with it, on both suppositions; if it be wrong, the criminality of it is always supposed to be palliated, rather than aggravated by the strength of the motive. It is sufficient to decide the question with those who suppose the fourth commandment to be still in force, to recollect that God has said, 'Thou shalt remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.'*

"R. H."

Besides the various sermons and reviews which Mr. Hall wrote and published, during his residence at Leicester, he composed for circulation among the associated Baptist churches in the counties of Northampton, Leicester, and Warwick, two tracts on the Work of the Holy Spirit, and on Hearing the Word; both deeply imbued with simple evangelical truth, and rich in excellent practical remarks, fitted for the beneficial perusal of all classes. There were also other compositions which he executed with singular felicity. I mean, his biographical sketches. They are, except the rapid but exquisite sketches of Brainerd, Fletcher of Madeley, and

* In his shorter letter on the same subject, inserted in the Christian Guardian for August, 1816, he says, "In the Sunday-school belonging to Harvey Lane, a certain portion of the scholars are taught writing on a week-day evening."

Henry Martyn, the delineations *of a friend;* and, perhaps, in a few particulars, need a slight allowance for the high colouring to which the warmth of friendship tempts us when meditating upon departed excellence; yet they are, on the whole, exact in the resemblance, and finely exemplify the author's varied powers, especially his delicate and accurate discrimination of the degrees and shades of human character.

One of these, the character of the Rev. John Sutcliff, is an unfinished portrait; Mr. Hall, after a few unsatisfactory trials, relinquishing the attempt. The following letter to Mr. Fuller, on the occasion of this failure, will be read with interest, as an example both of his diffidence and of his sense of the obligation of a promise.

"My Dear Brother,

"I am truly concerned to tell you that I cannot succeed "at all in my attempts to draw the character of our dear "and venerable brother Sutcliff. I have made several ef- "forts, and have sketched, as well as I could, the outlines of "what I conceive to be his character; but have failed in "producing such a portrait as appears to me fit for the pub- "lic eye. I am perfectly convinced that your intimacy with "him, and your power of discrimination, will enable you to "present to posterity a much juster and more impressive "idea of him than I can. I am heartily sorry I promised "it. But promises I hold sacred; and, therefore, if you "insist upon it, and are not willing to release me from my "engagement, I will accomplish the task as well as I can. "But, if you will let the matter pass *sub silentio,* without "reproaching me, you will oblige me considerably. It ap- "pears to me that, if I ever possessed a faculty of character- "drawing, I have lost it, probably for want of use; as I am "far from taking any delight in a minute criticism on cha- "racter, to which, in my younger days, I was excessively "addicted. Both our tastes and talents change with the "progress of years. The purport of these lines, however, "is to request you to absolve me from my promise, in which "light I shall interpret your silence; holding myself ready, "however, to comply with your injunctions,

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Your affectionate Brother,

Sept. 1814. "R. Hall."*

* Some of the most delightful of these pictures, as those of Toller,

For several years, about this time, Mr. Hall's thoughts were greatly occupied upon the subject of "Terms of Communion." His first publication in reference to it appeared in 1815: but they who were admitted to his intimacy, will recollect how often, three or four years before its appearance, he advocated a cautious revision of the practice of nearly all the churches, with regard to constant or occasional communion; and how successfully he refuted the arguments of those who favoured any narrow system of exclusion. He regarded the existence of a principle which made so many churches points of repulsion instead of centres of union, as a very serious evil; and often deplored it in language similar to that which commences his first production on the subject.

The discussion, indeed, is neither of slight, nor of temporary interest. It involves the prevailing practice of every church in christendom, whether established, or independent of an establishment; and it includes an answer to the inquiry how purity of faith and conduct shall be preserved, without an infringement of the principles requisite to make *every* church a portion of that sublime invisible society, the "Church Universal," constituted of all the members of Christ's mystical body.

Rapidly approaching, as we seem to be, to that state of things, when all churches, national as well as others, will feel the expediency, if not the necessity, of reverting to first principles in modifying and improving their several communities, the controversy on "Terms of Communion" forces itself upon the attention as one of primary importance, serving to ascertain and determine almost every question of value in reference to ecclesiastical polity. Mr. Hall thus states the purpose of the investigation:

"The practice of incorporating private opinions and "human inventions with the constitution of a church, "and with the terms of communion, has long appeared "to the author untenable in its principle, and pernicious

Fuller, Fletcher, Brainerd, and Henry Martyn, were composed after Mr. Hall had thus declined the character of Sutcliff from a feeling of incompetency.

"in its effects. There is no position in the whole com-"pass of theology of the truth of which he feels a strong-"er persuasion, than that no man, or set of men, are "entitled to prescribe, as an indispensable condition of "communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined "as a condition of salvation. To establish this position "is the principal object of the following work; and "though it is more immediately occupied in the discus-"sion of a case which respects the Baptists and Pedo-"baptists, that case, as attempted to be decided upon the "principle now mentioned, is no more than the applica-"tion of it to a particular instance."

In this discussion, more perhaps than in any in which Mr. Hall engaged, he manifested his power of "breath-"ing a soul into the driest bones of controversy." At the same time, while he contended for that true Christian liberty which many have sacrificed from mistaken notions of what "unity of spirit" really requires, he sedulously guarded against the deduction of latitudinarian notions and practices from the principles which he so earnestly and successfully advocated.

"He who contends," says Mr. Hall, "that no agree-"ment in doctrine is essential to communion, must, if he "understands himself, either mean to assert that Christ-"ianity contains no fundamental truths, or that it is not "necessary that a member of a church should be a "Christian. The first of these positions sets aside the "necessity of faith altogether; the last is a contradiction "in terms."

In order to obtain this agreement, creeds, and summaries of the principles of religion, have often been framed and enforced; and

"Though these summaries of Christian doctrine fre-"quently contain articles, which, admitting them to be "true, are not fundamental, they were originally deemed "such by their fabricators, or supposed at least to be ac-"companied with such a plenitude of evidence as no "sincere inquirer could resist; and they are continued "under the same persuasion."

The inefficacy of such terms of communion, except

they are very simple and confined strictly to fundamentals, is fully confirmed by experience, if it thus become evident that they are altogether unavailing in producing uniformity of sentiment with regard to the points they comprehend; that is, if it be manifest that they fail *as a test*. And if, in addition to this, they are made the substitute for discipline, by superseding the necessity of *moral qualifications*, they become scripturally *unlawful*, independently of their violation of the apostolic injunction (in Rom. xiv. xv. &c.) to tolerate a diversity of sentiment on points avowedly not fundamental. If, then, an apparent uniformity may be confounded with real "unity of spirit," if the spirit of the Gospel be lost sight of in pursuing the phantom instead of the substance, and if that causeless or unnecessary separation of one part of the church of Christ from another, which is essentially *a schism*, has resulted from the mistake, it is more than time that some judicious, strenuous efforts were made to expose and remove the evil; and such are those of Mr. Hall. "All attempts (says he) to urge men "forward, even in the right path, beyond the measure of "their light, are impracticable, if they were lawful; and "unlawful, if they were practicable. Augment their "light, conciliate their affections, and they will follow of "their own accord."

I have thus, though but for a moment, adverted to this controversy, that the general reader may not be induced to undervalue it. It occupies the third volume of the present edition of the Works. Of the different writers who opposed Mr. Hall on this occasion, Mr. Kinghorn was, unquestionably, the most acute and learned. His volume should be read, in connexion with Mr. Hall's, by such as wish to view the question in all its bearings.* Mr. Hall's part of the controversy is conducted with his characteristic frankness and decision; and evinces the same clearness, copiousness, strength, and majesty of language, as he uniformly displayed upon

* Mr. Kinghorn studied under Mr. Hall at Bristol, and died about a year after him. He was much beloved by the church and congregation at Norwich, over which he was placed, and greatly respected by the inhabitants of the city.

every subject to which he bent his mind with all its power. He proceeds in the argument with remarkable acumen, and employs the most convincing logic. He very successfully exposes the false reasoning of his opponent, showing not only that it is indefensible, but that it often leads to consequences which are self-contradictory and absurd. Much of this work is written in Mr. Hall's most animated style, and it frequently exhibits flashes of wit which remind the reader of those of Pascal in his Provincial Letters. Sometimes when a narrow, illiberal sentiment, calculated to check the spirit of christian union and affection, excites his indignation, he rebukes with a cutting severity: and I feel no inclination to deny, that in *a few* cases, he has suffered himself to indulge in terms of sarcasm, if not of contempt, that add nothing to his argument, and had been better spared. Yet, as one of his bitterest opponents has declared, "it was seldom that his thunder was heard, but the bolt was felt; and both were exercised on the side of truth and virtue."

In these, as in others of his controversial pieces, the reader may safely reckon upon much that is eloquent and impressive, apart from what immediately relates to the questions under debate. Among which may be specified his severe but just strictures on Antinomianism, the fine remarks on excommunication, the beautiful delineation of the conduct of our Lord, the passages distinguishing between conditions of salvation and meritorious conditions, and those in which he discriminates between the atonement contemplated as a fact, and as a doctrine, and thence infers "the peculiar glory of the gospel in contradistinction from the law of Moses."*

About this time† Mr. Hall had a correspondence with

* See Vol. III., in various places.

† Nearly at this time, also, viz., in September, 1817, the faculty of Marischal College, Aberdeen, at the instance of their late learned principal, Dr. W. L. Brown, conferred upon Mr. Hall the degree of D. D. in testimony of their high admiration of his talents and character. He felt much gratified by this mark of their good opinion; but, having a conscientious objection to the title of Doctor of *Divinity*, he never adopted it.

a friend on a kindred subject, that of occasional communion. That individual, though a decided Baptist, in reference both to the mode of baptism, and the character of those who are entitled to it, and long a member of a dissenting church was in the habit of occasional communion with an episcopalian chapel in his neighbourhood, of which the minister held evangelical sentiments. Mr. Hall expressed a desire to be acquainted with his reasons for this practice. In reply, he informed Mr. Hall that he thought those reasons flowed obviously from the principles for which he himself was so earnestly and successfully contending; that one of the highest enjoyments of a man who humbly hoped he constituted a part of the church universal, was to testify his feeling of brotherhood with other assemblies of orthodox Christians than that with which he was immediately connected, by holding communion with them at convenient seasons: that in this respect, as the political grounds of dissent were of very little value in his esteem, he made no mental distinction between established and separate churches: that, having no conscientious objection to kneeling at the sacrament, and having resolved never to communicate even occasionally but where he had reason to believe the bulk of those who partook of the sacrament were real Christians, he felt no hesitation as to the propriety, while he could speak decidedly as to the comfort, of the course he had pursued. He stated, farther, that, with Richard Baxter he " disowned the principle of many who think " their presence maketh them guilty of all that is faulty " in the public worship and ministration: for this dis- " solveth all worshipping churches on earth without ex- " ception;" that he considered Baxter's refutation of Dr. Owen's arguments against occasional communion as complete: and that he would rather err in the spirit of Baxter and Howe, on such a question, than be right according to the narrow measures by which too many would enforce a contrary practice. Mr. Hall's reply, which is subjoined, exemplifies his usual manner of guarding against a misapprehension of the real extent of his agreement with another, upon any disputed point.

"6 *March*, 1818.

'My dear Friend,

"I am much obliged to you for the frankness with which "you have answered my inquiries. Perhaps I may not be "quite prepared to go with you the full extent of your mo-"deration; though on this I have by no means made up my "mind. I admire the spirit with which you are actuated, "and esteem you more than ever for the part you have "acted. I perfectly agree with you that *the old grounds* of "dissent are the true ones, and that our recent apologists "have mixed up too much of a political cast in their reason-"ings upon this subject. Though I should deprecate "the founding of *any established* church, in the popular "sense of that term, I think it very injudicious to lay that "as the corner stone of dissent. We have much stronger "ground in the *specific* corruptions of the church of Eng-"land, ground which our pious ancestors occupied, and "which may safely defy every attempt of the most powerful "and acute minds to subvert. With respect to occasional "conformity, I by no means think it involves an abandon-"ment of dissent; and I am inclined to think that were I "in a private station, (not a minister, I mean,) I should, "under certain circumstances, and in certain situations, be "disposed to practise it; though nothing would induce me "to acknowledge myself a permanent member of the church "of England.

"In regard to episcopacy, it appears to me entirely a "human, though, certainly, a very early invention. It was "unknown, I believe, in the apostolical times; with the ex-"ception, probably, of the latter part of John's time. But, "as it was practised in the second and third centuries, I "should have no conscientious objection to it. As it subsists "*at present* among us, I am sorry to say I can scarcely con-"ceive a greater [abuse]. It subverts equally the rights of "pastors and of people, and is nothing less than one of the "worst relics of the papal hierarchy. Were every thing "else what it ought to be in the established church, prelacy, "as it now subsists, would make me a decided dissenter.

* * * * * *

"I remain, my dear, Sir, with great esteem,

"Yours most affectionately,

"R. Hall."*

* It may not be improper to add now (October 1838), in order simply to prevent misapprehension, that the above letter was addressed to the author of this memoir.

Mr. Hall's engagements for the press, numerous and heavy as they were, to one who wrote with so much difficulty and pain, did not draw him aside from pastoral watchfulness over his church and congregation; nor were they permitted to shorten those hours of retirement in which he sought "converse with God." Nothing, on the contrary, was more evident than his increased spirit of devotion as he advanced in life. About the year 1812, he commenced the practice of setting apart one day in a month for especial prayer and fasting. On these occasions he retired into his study immediately after the morning domestic worship, and remained there until the evening. Finding this eminently conducive to his own comfort, at the end of about two years he recommended the church to hold quarterly fasts. They at once adopted the recommendation; and some of the members often speak of the first meeting for this purpose, as a most extraordinary season of devout and solemn feeling.

About the same time, or somewhat earlier, he announced his opinion of the disadvantage arising from the presence of others besides the communicants on sacramental occasions. In a short address he explained the customs of the early Christians with regard to the Lord's Supper, and showed that the admission of spectators, who were not members of the church, during the celebration, was, comparatively, a modern innovation. He pointed out the inconclusiveness of the ordinary arguments,—that spectators often receive benefit from the addresses of the ministers, and that therefore their exclusion was cutting them off from good, and that such exclusion was an infringement of religious liberty. He also stated that the presence of such spectators deprived him of much comfort during the communion service, and that he should regard their keeping away as a personal kindness to himself. His address was received with affectionate respect; and from that time those who had previously remained to witness the administration discontinued the custom.

Some time after the conclusion of his part of the controversy on "Terms of Communion," he made an effort

to persuade the church at Harvey Lane to adopt the practice of "mixed communion;" but finding that it would disturb the peace which had so long subsisted in the society, he relinquished his intention, and recommended the formation of a distinct church on the mixed communion principle, its sacramental service being held on the morning of the same sabbath on which the "strict communion" church held its corresponding service in the afternoon. This plan was adopted and followed during Mr. Hall's continuance at Leicester, without causing any interruption of the harmony which prevailed among the different classes of worshippers.

Having frequently noticed the difficulty with which some pious individuals introduce religious conversation, and after lamenting, indeed, his own deficiencies in this respect, it occurred to him, in conversation with some intelligent friends, that the difficulty might be greatly diminished, by publishing a selection of texts for every day in the year, for the use of the members of his church and congregation. By this expedient it was hoped that each, when meditating upon one of the portions of Scripture thus recommended, might be led to reflect that several of his religious associates had their thoughts employed simultaneously upon the same passage, and that this conviction would prepare the way for free and beneficial conversation. He therefore published in a very cheap form, "A Collection of References to Scripture Passages, doctrinal, practical and experimental, for the furtherance of knowledge and grace in all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. For every day in the year;" to which he prefixed the following remarks:—

"That the word of Christ dwell in us richly is an apos-
"tolical injunction, which no sincere Christian will permit
"himself to neglect. It has been judged however, that some
"benefit might result from selecting a particular passage of
"Scripture as the special subject of meditation for the day,
"by which the difficulty of choice might be obviated, and a
"certain rallying point be presented to the thoughts. It is
"also conjectured that it is desirable that a number of Chris-
"tians be invited to make *the same* passage the subject of

"devout meditation, by which a tacit communion of minds "may be maintained and brotherly love promoted.

"An expedient of this kind has long been adopted among "the Moravian brethren. A little volume is annually circu-"lated among them, consisting of a passage of Scripture for "every day in the year; and their experience attests the "advantage they have derived from such a humble in-"strument of piety. This small collection of passages for "the ensuing year is offered to the candid attention of a "particular Christian society, from a similar motive, and "with a view to the same benefit. The efficacy, however, "of every instrument must depend upon its application: "and if the members of the church, for whose use it is espe-"cially intended, will take the trouble to turn to their "Bibles and meditate on the passage referred to for each "day, it is surely no presumption to hope that they will be "sensible of the benefit derived from it in the cultivation of "devotional feeling and the increase of fraternal affection. "The texts are only *referred to,* and not printed at large, "partly on the ground of economy, and partly because it "has been supposed that the act of turning to the Bible, in "order to peruse the text, may have the effect of engraving "it more deeply on the mind, as well as of inviting attention "to the context.

"That this little manual may be productive of spiritual "improvement, is the sincere and ardent prayer of the per-"sons engaged in its compilation.

"ROBERT HALL."

In the year 1823, the minister of a Unitarian congregation at Leicester, having delivered a series of what are usually denominated "Challenge Lectures," in defence of his own opinions, to hear which individuals of other persuasions were publicly invited, Mr. Hall felt it to be his duty to offer a timely antidote to the evil. He, therefore, preached twelve lectures on the points at issue, and had the happiness to know that they were serviceable in checking the diffusion of Socinian error. His concise outline of these lectures, as well as fuller notes of two or three, are inserted in the fifth volume of the Works. He was strongly urged by several members of his congregation, and by various neighbouring ministers, to publish the whole; but uniformly replied, that though he believed they had been beneficial, he was conscious

they contained nothing that could be regarded as really new in the controversy; and that Dr. Wardlaw had so admirably occupied the ground in his sermons, already before the public, that any thing which he could offer in print would only be regarded as an impertinent intrusion.

Throughout the whole of Mr. Hall's residence at Leicester, he suffered much from his constitutional complaint; and neither his habit of smoking nor that of taking laudanum,* seemed effectually to alleviate his sufferings. Exercise, of every kind, lost its pleasure, and he, who through life grew in the delightful art of drawing happiness from the circumstances in which he found himself, was now often heard to say, "No; don't let us go yet; the present place is the best place." It was truly surprising that his constant severe pain, and the means adopted to mitigate it, did not in any measure diminish his mental energy. A little difference, was perhaps, discernible in the vivacity of his conversation; but his preaching had, as yet, lost nothing of its force. In letters to his friends he expressed a hope that "a greater "savour of Jesus Christ accompanied his ministry;" and remarked, that "his strain of preaching was much less "elegant, but more intended for instruction, for awakening conviction, and carrying home truth with power to "the heart."

There can, indeed, be no question, as to the general and constantly increasing excellency of his preaching during his residence at Leicester. "I am persuaded," remarks a brother minister, who knew him long and intimately, "that there, more than any where, he bent the "whole force of his mind to prevail on sinners to be re-"conciled to God. He had incessant recourse to every "topic of warning and encouragement, that his know-"ledge, genius, and piety could suggest, to raise souls to "heaven." "And such," says an old and valuable member of his church, "was often the universality and depth of the impression, that every thing seemed moved and agitated but the materials of which the building was

* In 1812 he took from fifty to a hundred drops every night. Before 1826 the quantity had increased to a thousand drops.

composed." It was the frequent remark of another, founded upon the cogency of his appeals to the consciences of his hearers:—"They that will not leave off sinning, must, I am sure, leave off coming to meeting; for they can have no quiet there." And thus it appeared, that, as he advanced in years, though there might be a *little* less of elaboration and polish, there was more of spiritual feeling, more of tender and earnest expostulation, and of that pungency of application to the heart and conscience, which resulted from an enlarged acquaintance with human character, and a deeper knowledge of "the things of God." That the divine blessing accompanied these labours, and in many cases rendered the impression permanent, the history of the church and congregation abundantly proves.

The death of Dr. Ryland in 1825 led to Mr. Hall's invitation to take the pastoral office over the church at Broadmead, Bristol, an office which had been long and honourably sustained by that excellent individual. After some months spent in anxious deliberation, in advising with his friends, and seeking counsel from above, from the dread he felt lest he "should rush into a sphere of "action to which he was not called, and offend God by "deserting his proper post," he at length decided to dissolve his long and happy connexion with the church at Leicester.* The day of separation, the last sacrament Sabbath, March 26, 1826, was a day of anguish to him and them, of which I shall not attempt the description. Suffice it to say, that he went through the ordinary public duties with tolerable composure;† but at the sacramental service he strove in vain to conceal his emotion. In one of his addresses to the members of the church, on

* Some of the letters which passed on the occasion are inserted in this volume.

† In order that neither his feelings nor those of the congregation might be too severely tried, during the public services, he preached two sermons for the Baptist Mission:—That in the morning from Ephes. iii. 8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." That in the evening, from Matt. vi. 10: "Thy kingdom come."

On the ensuing day he preached a farewell sermon, though not so designated, to the neighbouring ministers, at Arnsby, his native place.

adverting to the pain of separation, he was so much affected that he sat down, covered his face with his hands, and wept; they sharing in his distress, gave unequivocal signs of the deepest feeling. Mr. Eustace Carey, who was present, continued the devotional part of the service, until Mr. Hall was sufficiently recovered to proceed. At the close of the solemnity the weeping became again universal, and they parted " sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more."

Very shortly afterwards the church received from Mr. Hall the following letter of resignation:

TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MEETING IN HARVEY-LANE, LEICESTER.

" *3d April*, 1826.

" My dear Brethren and Sisters,

" I take this opportunity of solemnly and affectionately " resigning the pastoral charge which I have long sustained " among you, and of expressing, at the same time, the deep " sense I shall ever retain of the marks of affection and " esteem, with which, both collectively and individually, " you have honoured me.

" Though the providence of God has, as I conceive, called " me to labour in another part of his vineyard, my solicitude " for your spiritual welfare will ever remain unimpaired; " nor will any thing give me more joy than to hear of your " growth in grace, peace, and prosperity. My prayer will " never cease to ascend to the God of all comfort, that he will " establish your hearts in love, unite you more and more in " the fellowship of saints, and make you fruitful in every " good work.

" Let me earnestly intreat you to guard most anxiously " against whatever may tend to weaken your union, diminish your affection, or embitter your spirits against each " other. 'Let brotherly love continue:' 'Seek peace and " pursue it:' and 'may the God of peace, who brought again " from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd " of the sheep, establish, strengthen, settle, and make you " perfect.'

" I hope that, in the choice of a successor, you will earnestly and anxiously seek divine direction: prefer the " useful to the splendid; the solid to the glittering and " showy; and be supplied with a pastor who will, in doctrine, exhibit 'uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and sound

"speech which cannot be condemned,' and be in manner "and behaviour a pattern to believers.

"Permit me, on this occasion, to return you my sincere "acknowledgements for the uniform kindness with which "you have treated me, the respectful attention you have "paid to my ministry, and the candour with which you "have borne my infirmities.

"With my most earnest prayers for your spiritual and "eternal welfare, I remain, my dear Brethren and Sisters,

"Your obliged and affectionate
"Friend and Brother,
"Robert Hall."

At the same time he addressed a letter to the mixed-communion church over which he presided; and which it is equally desirable to preserve.

TO THE OPEN COMMUNION CHURCH, MEETING IN HARVEY LANE, LEICESTER.

"My dear Brethren and Sisters,

"I take this opportunity of expressing my warmest ac-"knowledgements for the uniform kindness and attention I "have received at your hands, at the same time that I re-"sign my pastoral charge among you.

"Let me hope, my dear friends, that you will still continue "your communion, since you may rest assured that the con-"gregation and church at Harvey Lane will never make "choice of a pastor who will scruple the communion of "pious Pedobaptists; and I have little doubt that in a short "time 'the middle wall of partition' will be broken down; "an event which I well know would give great pleasure to "a vast majority of the Baptist Society.

"Be assured, my dear friends, that the difference of sen-"timent between us, on one point of very inferior import-"ance, has never, for a moment, abated any thing of my "esteem for your character, or my sense of your kindness.

"I have had my trials, but I must in justice say, they have "in no degree arisen from *you*, whose religious deportment "has uniformly been such as to give me pleasure. I am so "conscious of the credit which your exemplary conduct has "reflected on the Christian profession, that I cannot sup-"press my anxiety that you may continue your communion "at Harvey Lane, not doubting that it will terminate, ere "long, in that entire coalition with your fellow Christians, "which the principles of Christianity demand.

"That the God of peace may take up his abode among

'you, and enrich you abundantly with every spiritual bless-
'ing in Christ Jesus, is the sincere prayer of

"My dear Brethren and Sisters,

"Your obliged and affectionate friend and brother,

"ROBERT HALL."

Two other letters which Mr. Hall wrote within a few months of his removal to Bristol, I here insert; one of them strongly marking his continued persuasion of the evil tendency of heterodox and infidel sentiments, while the other evinces the affectionate interest which he took in the welfare of Dr. Ryland's widow and family, and the characteristic energy with which, in few words, he pleaded their cause.

TO A YOUNG MINISTER.

"*February* 7*th*, 1826.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AVAIL myself of the opportunity afforded me by the "kindness of * * * to convey a few lines in acknow- "ledgement of a favour to which I ought much sooner to have "replied. You are aware, I dare say, of my reluctance to "writing letters, which I might urge as an excuse for my "neglect, but that to allege a habit of transgression may be "deemed a poor apology for the act.

"I sympathize with you sincerely under the trials attendant "on your present situation: I am sorry for, though not at all "surprised at them. Little, Sir, could be expected from "uniting yourself so intimately with those with whom you "feel no congeniality on the most interesting subjects of "human contemplation. Of all classes (the Antinomian "excepted) the most untractable and unimpressible people "to deal with are those who are strongly tinctured with "either Unitarian or Deistical pravity. Cold, conceited, "opinionative, they are of all persons at the farthest remove "from religious conviction and true candour, to which, how- "ever, they make the most exclusive pretensions.

* * * * * *

"It gives me very great pleasure to find, in contradiction "to some flying rumours, that you continue so steadfast in "your adherence to the Gospel, and as this is the case, I do "not doubt you will derive great benefit from your present "situation, through the means of that increased conviction "of the practical importance of evangelical truth, which it "cannot fail to have produced. You will probably be dis-

"posed ere long to remove to a situation where you may "possess a greater prospect of happiness and usefulness. "If such should be your intention, it would give me great "pleasure to inform you of any eligible opening that might "occur. You are aware, probably, that I am engaged to "remove to Bristol in the spring. I should be much grati- "fied to have you as a neighbour, if any situation offered "itself worthy your attention. I hope, should you quit "your present post, you will never more entangle yourself "with a heterodox connexion. He who escapes its snares "will be almost sure not to escape its miseries.

* * * * * *

"May the Lord direct you in all your ways, is, dear Sir, "the sincere prayer of,

"Yours affectionately,
"ROBERT HALL."

TO THE REV. JOHN DYER,

SECRETARY OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

[Soliciting an Annuity for the Widow of Dr. Ryland.]

"*Bristol, Jan. 8th,* 1827.

"DEAR SIR,

"I BEG leave to trouble you with a few lines on behalf of "Mrs. Ryland. Her situation is such, that without the con- "tinuance of the aid allowed by the Society last year, she "feels herself quite incapable of remaining in her present "house, which is nothing more than a decent comfortable "habitation, and in no respect superior to what every feel- "ing mind would judge suitable to the widow of Dr. Ryland. "Her three daughters are, in a great degree, incapable of "any lucrative exertion on account of habitual ill health, "and one of them has long been so seriously ill, as to be a "source of continual expense. I say nothing of the charac- "ter and merits of Dr. Ryland, which are far above my "praise. Nor is it necessary for me to remind the commit- "tee of his early patronage of the mission, of which he was "the second father, his devotion to its interests, which min- "gled with the last pulsations of his heart, and his laborious "exertions in its service, without fee or reward. On all "these accounts I cannot but conceive the request of Mrs. "Ryland, for the continuance of the allowance of the last "year, most reasonable, and such as cannot be denied, "without bringing great discredit on the Society. Any "slight put upon Dr. Ryland in the persons of those most

"dear to him, will be found to be a miserable policy; nor "can I conceive of any thing more likely to disgust the "friends of the mission, not only in this city and vicinity, "but throughout the nation at large. Surely a religious and "philanthropic society will never allow itself to incur the "censure of ingratitude to its warmest supporters, or of "neglecting the sorrows of the fatherless and the widow.

"I am extremely sorry it is found necessary to solicit "the aid of the Society on her behalf; but as it *is* necessary, "I know none to whom I can apply with equal propriety "to recommend her case to the committee, with yourself; "nor can I doubt that an application so enforced would "prove successful. All that Mrs. Ryland presumes to hope "is, that the committee will be so kind as to continue the "disbursement they were so good to make the last year. "By an early attention to this business, you will confer a "lasting obligation on, dear Sir,

"Your obliged Friend and Brother,

"ROBERT HALL."

Mr. Hall was in his sixty-second year when he removed to Bristol, the scene of his first continuous labours, and now to become the scene of his closing ministry. Some of the friends of his early life still survived to welcome his return among them; and many others, who had profited by his pulpit exertions on his periodical visits to Bristol, congratulated themselves that he to whom, under God, they owed so much, had become their pastor. All things indeed, except his infirm state of health, seemed to conspire in promoting his own happiness as well as the prosperity of the Church with which he had again connected himself.

The church and congregation soon received numerous accessions. In writing to a friend, early in 1829, he says, "I continue to be very happy with my people, from "whom I daily receive every demonstration of affection "and respect. Our attendance is as good as I could "wish; and we have added to the *Baptist* church, during "the last year, twenty-seven, and six are standing can-"didates for baptism. For these tokens of the divine "presence I desire to be thankful."

His heavenly Father during the concluding years of his life, made a rich provision for his social enjoyments,

both in his family, and among his friends. Besides the comfort of frequent association with many of his own flock, his pleasures were greatly heightened by intercourse with Mr. Foster, and the tutors of the Baptist Academy, as well as with several clergymen and other ministers, and laymen, residing in Bristol and its vicinity. It is true, that wherever he went, or in whatever he engaged, he carried with him the complaint from which he had suffered so much and so long. It had become, as his esteemed friend Mr. Addington termed it, "an internal apparatus of torture," accompanied frequently by a sensation designated by himself in describing his symptoms to an eminent physician, as "a living dissolution;" yet, such was the peculiar structure of his mind, doubtless fortified and prepared for patient endurance by an energy imparted from above, that though his appointment by day and by night was incessant pain, yet high *enjoyment* was, notwithstanding, the law of his existence.

Between his final removal to Bristol and his death, he visited his friends at Cambridge twice, namely, in 1827 and 1829. These visits were undertaken with the sense of responsibility of one who had formerly been their pastor: and he made it a rule so to arrange his time while there as to see, converse with, and exhort, every member of the church, and a great proportion of the congregation. He paid also one visit to his recently quitted flock at Leicester; and two to his friends in London. On these occasions the anxiety to hear him preach was as great as it had ever been; while his sermons were characterized in a high degree by the qualities that had long distinguished them,—with the addition of a stronger manifestation of religious and benevolent affections, a still more touching persuasiveness of manner, continued with an increasing intensity of feeling, with deeper and deeper solemnity of appeal; the entire effect being greatly augmented by the sudden introduction, just as the last sentence seemed dropping from his lips, of some new topic of application or of caution, most urgently pressed; as though he *could* not cease to invite, to warn, to expostulate, until the "Great Master of Assemblies" vouch-

safed to him the assurance that he had not been pleading his cause in vain."*

Mr. Hall's increasing infirmities did not extinguish his literary ardour, or abate his love of reading. Except during the first years of his residence at Cambridge, reading, and the thinking it called forth, were his incessant occupation to the very close of life; and both the pursuit and its application to the benefit of others, yielded him the highest delight. In his early life, as I have already mentioned, it was common with him to carry on five or six different courses of study, simultaneously. But for the last ten or twelve years, he mostly confined himself to one book at a time, and read it to the end. His reading continued to be very extensive and varied (for it was his decided opinion that every species of knowledge might be rendered subservient to religion), but his predilection, next to the scriptures, was for works of clear, strong, and conclusive reasoning, though conveyed in language far from elevated, and sometimes perhaps obscure. Thus he, for sixty years, read Jonathan Edwards's writings with undiminished pleasure. And of Chillingworth's "Religion of Protestants," he has often been known to say, "It is just like reading a novel:" which, indeed, was his usual expression of commendation, with regard to such works of a dry or abstract nature, as discovered subtlety, depth, or vigour of thought. In this class he placed the works of Jeremy Bentham, for whom he entertained the highest estimation, as an original, profound, and accurate thinker; observing often, that in the particular province of his speculations, the science of legislation, he had advanced to the limits of reason; and that if *he* were compelled to legislate for the world upon uninspired principles, "he should take Ben-"tham, and go from state to state with as firm a step as

* It was seldom that the friends who attempted to take down Mr. Hall's sermons did not unconsciously relinquish writing as he approached the close. The reader, however, who never had the privilege of hearing him preach, will be able to form *some* conception of his impressive terminations, from the last ten pages of the sermon on "the Glory of God in concealing." See, also, the last three pages of the sermon on "the Glory of Christ's Kingdom;" and portions of that on "the Lamb of God."

"though he walked upon a pavement of adamant."*

If, at any time, he could not settle a point of interest without studying a language of which he was ignorant, that constituted no impediment. Shortly before he quitted Leicester, a friend found him one morning, very early, lying on the carpet, with an Italian dictionary and a volume of Dante before him. Being about to quit the room, he said, "No, Sir, don't go. I will tell you what I "have been about for some weeks. A short time since "I was greatly delighted with a parallel between the "Paradise Lost and the Divine Comedy of Dante, which "I read in the Edinburgh Review. But in matters of "taste, as well as others, I always like to judge for my-"self; and so I have been studying Italian. I have "caught the idiom, and am reading Dante with great "relish; though I cannot yet say, with Milton,

'Now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly or I can run.'"

It may seem somewhat out of place, yet I shall be forgiven if I here insert an extract of a letter just received from Mr. Ryley, one of Mr. Hall's most intelligent Leicester friends, in reference to his course of reading there.

"It was what some men might think desultory; but "it was essentially a constant habit of grappling with "the strong. *Belles Lettres* he did not altogether neglect, "though he held the average of such literature in small "estimation. Poetry he seldom read, nor did he seem "to have ever studied it *con amore.* He thought Gray's "Elegy the finest thing ever written. Milton was his "favourite. There was something peculiar in his habits "respecting poetry. He spoke lightly of poets, with few "exceptions, and those few by no means what might "have been expected from his own highly imaginative "cast of mind. Yet, when he did get hold of an exqui-"site poem, he would read it with intense attention, ap-

* He always recommended those who were likely to be offended with the strangeness of Bentham's style, to study his principles through the medium of his elegant French commentator, M. Dumont.

"parently with the deepest interest, and then abuse it. "With the exception of Milton, who is, in fact, an "antique, he preferred the ancient to the modern poets. "Of the poetry of our own day he spoke with a con- "tempt, which an accurate or extensive acquaintance "with it would have compelled him to relinquish. He "had not, I think, made history a distinct and conse- "cutive study, though he had read many of the ori- "ginal historians. He seemed to feel this of late years, "and gave much of his time to the subject."

His enjoyment of the writings of the illustrious men of Greece and Rome remained unimpaired to the last. Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, suggested to him many noble arguments in favour of an internal spring of morality, which he employed with his wonted skill in support of the religion of pure motive and devotedness of spirit. Virgil's Georgics he characterized as the most finished of human compositions; and he continued to prefer Virgil to Homer. He greatly admired the copiousness, grace, and harmony, of Cicero's diction; but considered Demosthenes by far the most powerful orator the world had known; and, after speaking with fervid applause of the oration περι Στεφανου, added, that he thought it impossible for a man of soul and feeling to read a single page without catching fire. Only a few months before his last illness, in classifying the different natures and respective effects of the eloquence of reason, of passion, and of imagination, he selected his principal illustrations from Demosthenes, and endeavoured to show, that where the two former kinds of eloquence existed in due proportion, the third was of very minor consequence. The individual to whom he made these remarks was struck, as he proceeded, with the developement which they supplied of the causes of the deep impression made by his own pulpit addresses; and imputed his more sparing use of imagery in later years, rather to the deliberate conviction of his mind than to any diminution of the imaginative faculty.

But I must restrain myself, and pass to Mr. Hall's every-day habits after his return to Bristol. The course

of his life at home, when not interrupted by visitors, was very uniform. He generally rose and took his breakfast about nine o'clock. Breakfast was immediately succeeded by family worship. At this exercise he went regularly through the Scriptures, reading a portion of the Old Testament in the morning, and of the New Testament in the evening. On Sunday morning he almost invariably read the ninety-second Psalm, being short, and appropriate to the day. He also read in his family the translation of the four Gospels, by Campbell, whom he particularly admired, and often recommended, as an accurate translator and a critic of great acuteness, taste, and judgement. He seldom made any remarks on the portion of Scripture, except when strangers were present who he knew would be disappointed at their entire omission. He regarded himself as very incompetent to render this brief kind of exposition instructive. In the prayer that succeeded he was not in the habit of forming his petitions on the passage of Scripture just read, though the prayer was usually of considerable length, and very minute in its appropriation. He adverted specifically to all the persons belonging to his family, present and absent; never forgot the people of his care; and dwelt on the distinct cases of members of the Church that were under any kind of trial or affliction.

After breakfast and worship he retired into his study, and uniformly spent some time in devotion, afterwards generally reading a portion of the Hebrew Bible. For the two last years he read daily two chapters of Matthew Henry's Commentary; a work which he had not before read consecutively, though he had long known and valued it. As he proceeded he felt increasing interest and pleasure, greatly admiring the copiousness, variety, and pious ingenuity of the thoughts; the simplicity, strength and pregnancy of the expressions.* He earnestly recommend-

* Soon after Mr. Hall's removal to Bristol, a respectable London bookseller offered him £100 to write a commendatory preface to a new edition of this Commentary. The proposal gave him much uneasiness. "I write a recommendation to Matthew Henry! Never! Mr. —— "must think me a most mercenary wretch. Why did not he offer me "£100 to paint a diamond, or to extol the sweet scent of a violet?"

ed this Commentary to his daughters; and on hearing the eldest reading, for successive mornings, to the second, he expressed the highest delight. The remainder of the morning until dinner, about three o'clock, was spent in reading some work of learning, or of severe thought. After dinner he generally retired to his study, and if not in so much pain as to prevent it, slept for some time.

Every Tuesday evening a meeting termed "the conference" is held in the vestry at Broadmead: it is ordinarily attended by about two hundred persons; and two of the students belonging to the Bristol Education Society, or one of the students, and the president, speak on a passage of Scripture previously selected for the purpose. Mr. Hall was generally present, and concluded by speaking for about a quarter of an hour on the subject of the preceding addresses. He also attended the prayer meetings, in the same place, on Thursday evenings; except once a month, namely, on the Thursday previous to the administration of the Lord's Supper, when he preached.

The other evenings in the week, except Saturday (and that, indeed, not always excepted), he usually spent at the house of one or other of his congregation, with a few friends, who were invited to meet him. His inability to walk having greatly increased, his friends generally sent a carriage for him about six o'clock, and conveyed him back about ten.

It is difficult to say whether he had greater fondness for retirement or for company. It displeased him if, especially by sudden interruptions, he was obliged to give up his morning hours of study to visitors; and it would commonly have been a disappointment, if he had not the opportunity of spending his evenings in society. If he were, at any time, thrown among persons of distinguished talents and attainments, and their general character pleased him, it was soon shown how truth and knowledge might be educed by the operation of intellect upon intellect, and how rich a field of instruction and delight would thus be open for the general enjoyment of the party. Usually, however, his choice turned simply upon

the prerequisite of piety. He sought for no other acquisitions in his associates than the graces of the Spirit: intelligence added to the enjoyment, but was not essential to it. The society of old friends had with him an exquisite charm, which was greatly heightened if their fathers had been known and esteemed by him or his father; such intercourse, requiring no effort, gave full scope to his affections, without disturbing his mental repose. He uniformly retired from these evening parties full of grateful references to the pleasure which he had felt. If any of his family who accompanied him happened to say that the evening had been dull, (which they would very naturally do if *he* had not been drawn out), he would reply, "I don't think so. It was very pleasant. I enjoyed it. I enjoy every thing."*

* A Reviewer of the first edition of this Memoir and the Works, makes some remarks in connexion with this, which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting.

"Here is a manifest indication of the natural temper and habit of "the man: and, light as the circumstance may possibly appear to some, "to us, we confess, it is one of the most instructive and glorious passages in his whole biography. Here was a man, whose powers "seemed almost adapted for converse with disembodied spirits,—"whose thoughts were frequently 'wandering through eternity,'—a "man, too, whose life was a constant wrestling against bodily anguish, "—whose corporeal structure was 'an apparatus of torment,'—and "who yet was able to seek and to find delight among the humbler re-"creations of society, and to exclaim in the gratitude and fulness of "his heart, '*I enjoy every thing!*'—Behold this, ye despisers, and won-"der! Think of this,—and then turn to the last hours of the sensual-"ist and the infidel,—of him, whose genius, it is to be feared, is, to this "day, as a *Lying Spirit* to many of the children of disobedience! "Hall, on the rack of a diseased organization, is able to enjoy every "thing. Byron, when his temples are throbbing with the self-inflicted "pains of a vicious life, cries out, 'There is nothing but misery in this "world, I think!' If this contrast does not speak to the hearts and "understandings of men, the voice of wisdom would be heard in vain "from the jaws of the sepulchre itself. 'To enjoy is to obey,' was "the maxim of the one; and *his* lips were touched with the living "flame of the altar. 'To disobey is to enjoy,' was the principle of "the other; and out of his mouth there leaped forth sparks, such as "might *set on fire the whole course of nature*. And when examples "like these are recorded for our instruction, does it not seem as if the "Lord himself were speaking to us, and calling heaven and earth to "witness against us, that life and death, blessing and cursing, are, even "in this world, most manifestly set before us?"—*British Critic*, "April, 1833.

Mr. Hall, having previously assembled his own family for worship, commonly retired to rest a little before eleven o'clock; but, after his first sleep, which lasted about two hours, he quitted his bed to obtain an easier position on the floor, or upon three chairs; and would then employ himself in reading the book on which he had been engaged during the day. Sometimes, indeed often, the laudanum, large as the doses had become, did not sufficiently neutralize his pain, to remove the necessity for quitting his bed a second time.* In these cases he would again put on the dress prepared to keep him adequately warm, and resume his reading. On Sunday morning, as soon as he awoke, it was usual with him to say, "This is the Lord's day. This is the day the Lord "hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." And he often impressed it on his family, that they ought "not to "think their own thoughts," or "to find their own plea-"sure," on that day.

He did not pursue any plan of training, or of discipline, with his children. He was remarkably affectionate and indulgent; but he did nothing systematically to correct defects, to guide or excite their minds. Now and then he recommended his daughters to read some particular book; one, perhaps, that he had himself read with peculiar satisfaction: but beyond this there do not appear to have been any direct, specific endeavours to impart knowledge, or, in any uniform manner, to inculcate religious principles.

When, however, any of his children were about to quit home for a short time, it was his practice to summon them to his study, exhort them, and pray with them. One of his daughters, on writing to a friend after his death, says, "Well I remember that, when I was a child, "on leaving home for a few days, or on going to school, "he would call me into the study, give me the tenderest "advice, make me kneel down by him at the same chair, "and then, both bathed in tears, would he fervently sup-

* For more than twenty years he had not been able to pass a whole night in bed. When this is borne in mind, it is indeed astonishing that he wrote and published so much; nay, that he did not sink into dotage before he was fifty years of age.

"plicate the divine protection for me. This, I believe, "he did with regard to all of us on leaving home, while "young." Their minds were also often deeply impressed, by hearing him, as they passed his study door, commending them, by name, with the utmost fervency, to God, and entreating those blessings for each, which, in his judgement, each most needed.*

He was not in the habit of keeping a regular journal, nor, generally speaking, did he approve of it, from a persuasion that it tempted to an artificial tone of expression which did not accord with the actual state of the heart. But on some solemn occasions he made a short note in one of his memorandum books, containing hints of texts, &c.

Thus: "New-year's day, January 1st, 1826. I have begun the year with a sincere resolution, in the strength of "divine grace, to devote myself wholly and entirely to God: "but, knowing my extreme weakness and corruption, I dare "place no dependence whatever on my own resolutions. I "have on many occasions, found them unstable as water. "I can only cast myself on the mercy of my God, and cry "with the Psalmist, 'Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.' "O thou most holy and merciful Lord God, I beseech Thee "to take up thine abode in my heart, and shape me entirely "anew. Amen. Amen."

Again, on his birth day, 1828. "This day I commence "my 64th [65th] year. What reason have I to look with "shame and humiliation on so long a tract of years spent "to so little purpose! Alas! I am ashamed of my barren-"ness and unprofitableness. Assist me, O Lord, by Thy "grace, that I may spend the short residue of my days in a "more entire devotion to Thy service. It is my purpose, in "the strength of divine grace, to take a more minute inspec-"tion into the state of my heart, and the tenour of my ac-"tions, and to make such observations and memorandums "as circumstances may suggest. But to Thee, O Lord, do I "look for all spiritual strength, to keep Thy way, and to do "Thy will."

* His habit of oral, audible, private prayer, rested upon the conviction, that silent prayer was apt to degenerate into meditation; while, from our compound nature, a man cannot but be affected by the sound of his own voice, when adequately expressing what is really felt.

Mr. Hall still evinced a peculiar solicitude for the welfare of the poorer members of his flock, and greatly lamented his incapacity, from the loss of locomotive energy, to seek them out in their own habitations, and associate with them frequently, as he had done with the poor at Cambridge and Leicester. He publicly expressed his concern that some plan was not arranged for his meeting them in small parties at specified times, and assured them of the cordial readiness with which his part of such a plan should be executed. This, I believe, was not accomplished.

The indications of infirm age now rapidly exhibited themselves, but happily were unaccompanied by a decaying mind, or a querulous spirit. The language of his conduct, and of his heart, corresponded with that of the pious ancient, "Lord, give me patience now, and ease hereafter!" If tempests come they will not last long, but soon will be hushed into an eternal calm.

His inability to take exercise, on account of the gradual increase of his complaint, gave rise, about six years before his death, to another disorder, formidable in its nature and fatal in its issue. The results of a plethoric habit became more and more apparent. "Thus," adopting the language of Mr. Addington, "the system of the blood-vessels had a laborious duty to perform in circulating their fluid, which, for want of the full aid of muscular exertion, could not be equally distributed. The smaller ones on the surface of the body, and in the extremities, never appeared to derive a sufficient quantity of blood to furnish the usual proportion of animal heat, while the large trunks in the interior became overloaded. The natural consequence was, that the heart, on whose power the propulsion of the blood to the extremities depends, being over stimulated and oppressed by the condition of the large vessels, became weakened; and, occasionally failing in the regular and equable transmission of the blood, would produce a sensation of distress in the region of the chest." The malady thus produced, manifested itself in paroxysms, which recurred at intervals of a few weeks, sometimes,

of only a few days; they were usually severe, and, some of them very alarming. His church and congregation, anticipating the loss of their revered pastor at no very distant period, resolved, on his recovery from one of these severe attacks, to urge upon him with earnestness and affection the publication of a volume of his sermons. The following letter, signed by seventy members of the church and constant attendants upon Mr. Hall's ministry, was laid before him, by a deputation appointed for the purpose.

TO THE REV. ROBERT HALL.

Very Dear Sir,

Allow us to express the great pleasure that your recovery from your late indisposition has given to our minds. We are truly grateful to the Supreme Disposer for your restoration to such a degree of health and strength; and we earnestly pray, that, for the highest good to ourselves and many others, you may be long continued among us in the best exercise of all your faculties. While we pray and hope that this may be the case, the lapse of time, the precariousness of human life, and your recent seizure, concur to impress with peculiar force on our minds the conviction of the uncertain tenure by which we hold what we justly reckon among the first of our religious advantages, the opportunity of receiving your public instructions. We would, therefore, with all becoming deference, but *very earnestly*, request, that as a token of your regard for our spiritual and eternal welfare, you would leave with us a little sample of those most beautiful, powerful, and truly evangelical discourses that we are constantly hearing from your lips. We are very sensible that we make a large request; but it would be to those of us who may reach the time when the voice cannot any more convey to our ears the saving wisdom, a wonderful gratification to have a record of a small part of what we have listened to with so much pleasure, and we trust edification, to read ourselves, to recommend to our children, and propose as a model to our rising teachers. While we entertain a lively sense of the great and varied merits of the discourses that you have given to the public, it may be permitted us to say, that, having been delivered on public occasions, they have not the general application to the interior exercises of the christian life

which has distinguished many of those that we have heard in the ordinary course of your instruction.

If our earnest desires should induce the publication of a few of those discourses that have been preached for our spiritual improvement, and characterized by such clearness and force of reason, such simplicity, strength, and beauty of language, such an union of doctrine tending to piety and virtue, and of morality enforced and animated by the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, we shall feel that we have promoted an important service to vast numbers beyond the limits of our particular connexion, as well as to multitudes in the next generation.

That you may be long spared as a blessing among us, and indulged with all the supports and comforts of the true religion, is the fervent prayer of

YOUR AFFECTIONATE HEARERS.

Mr. Hall was deeply affected by this proof of his people's regard, and promised to take their request into his most serious consideration; but his reluctance to writing naturally increasing with his infirmities, he never found himself able to make the preparations for the press so anxiously desired.

In 1828, having some public engagements which took him to London, he was persuaded by his friends to take the advice of the late Dr. Armstrong; from which, however, no permanent good resulted. By the summer of 1830 the disorder had increased so seriously, that his medical friends at Bristol recommended a suspension of his pastoral duties for a few weeks, that he might try the effect of a total change of air and scene. He, therefore, spent some time at Coleford, in the forest of Dean, where, in consequence of a previous arrangement, he met his old and valued friend, the Rev. Isaiah Birt, and enjoyed much happiness in his society. He also spent a few weeks at Cheltenham. At both these places he preached with his accustomed talent; and his general appearance, too clearly indicating that the close of his ministerial labours was at hand, gave a deeper impression to his instructions and exhortations. His own feelings with respect to the state of his health, as well as his undiminished susceptibility of enjoyment of new

scenes, may be gathered from a letter addressed to Mr. Addington.

Cheltenham, 7th October, 1830.

"My dear Sir,

"I beg pardon for not replying sooner to your very kind "letter, in which you were so good as to express some soli- "citude respecting the effect of my visit to Cheltenham.

* * * *

"I can say little at present respecting the ultimate pros- "pect of benefit. I have had, now and then, a very slight "return of my complaint in the chest, but on the whole I "think I am considerably improved in the state of health. "I feel more vigour, and am more firm and strong than when "I came.

* * * *

"In my way, I spent a night at Berkeley, and was highly "delighted with the castle. It is an awful and majestic "pile, and replete with such relics of barbarous and bloody "times, as cannot fail to make a powerful impression on the "imagination. I saw the very room where Edward the Se- "cond was so cruelly murdered, and, as they say, the very "instrument with which the deed was perpetrated: also an "awful dungeon, about forty feet deep, circular, and the "walls perfectly smooth, so as to preclude all hope of es- "cape.

"I have passed two Lord's days at Cheltenham, preach- "ing once each day, and one at Shortwood, where I preached "twice. I was highly delighted with all I met with there. "The most enchanting natural beauties combine with 'the "beauties of holiness,' to render it a delightful place. The "sabbath I spent there was one of the pleasantest I ever "[enjoyed]; there is a congregation of about twelve hun- "dred hearers, with a prodigious number of young people, "'inquiring the way to Zion.' May the Lord send them a "pastor after his own heart!

* * * *

"I remain, my dear Sir,
"With much esteem,
"Your obliged and affectionate Friend,
"R. Hall."

When absent from home, Mr. Hall was in the habit of writing to his children. My narrow limits have pre-

vented my giving extracts from any of those letters; but I am induced to insert part of one, written at this time to his son, who had been placed with a respectable chemist and druggist at Bristol, in the hope that it may be useful to other youths in similar circumstances.

15th October, 1830.

"My dear Robert,

"I have long designed to write to you, that I might com-'municate to you some hints of advice, which I could con-"vey more easily, and perhaps more effectually, than by "speaking.

"I need not tell you, my dear boy, how solicitous I am "for your welfare in both worlds, and how often I have "borne you on my heart in my secret addresses to that "Father which is in heaven. But, alas! the prayers of "parents for their children will avail nothing, if they are not "induced to pray for themselves, 'for every one must give an "account of *himself* to God.' I hope, my dear child, you "do not live in the entire neglect of this most important "duty: let me entreat you to attend to it constantly, and "never to begin or end a day without it. Daily entreat the "pardon of your sins, for the sake of the Redeemer, and "earnestly implore the assistance of his grace, to enable you "to resist temptation, and to live in such a manner as shall "prepare you for a blessed immortality. Pray do not ne-"glect, at the same time, to read a portion, longer or shorter, "of the word of God. 'Wherewith shall a young man "cleanse his ways, but by taking heed thereto according to "thy word?'

"I hope, my dear Robert, you will continue in your pre-"sent situation. On the supposition of your doing so (and "I can do nothing better for you), let me entreat you to "make it your constant care to conciliate the esteem of Mr. "C——, which you will certainly do, if you cheerfully com-"ply with his orders, and make his interest your own. No-"thing injures the character of a young man more than "restlessness and fickleness; nothing, on the contrary, se-"cures his credit and comfort like a steady and persevering "attention to the duties of his station. Every situation has "its inconveniences and its difficulties; but time and perse-"verance will surmount the one, and make you almost in-"sensible of the other. The consciousness of having over-'come difficulties, and combatted trials successfully, will

"afford you, in the issue, a far higher satisfaction than you "can ever hope to obtain by recoiling from them.

"Combat idleness in all its forms; nothing is so destructive as idle habits, nothing so useful as habits of industry.

* * * * *

"Never demean yourself by contending about trifles; "yield in things of small moment to the inclinations and "humours of your companions. In a word, my dear boy, "make yourself amiable.

"Fear God, and love your fellow-creatures, and be assur-"ed you will find 'Wisdom's ways, ways of pleasantness, "and her paths, paths of peace.'

"To say all in one word, 'If you are wise, my heart shall "rejoice, even mine.'

"I am,

"Your affectionate Father,

"ROBERT HALL."*

On Mr. Hall's return to Bristol towards the end of October, hopes were entertained that his health was improved, and his strength recruited; but they were only of short duration. The spasmodic affection of the chest occurred with increasing frequency, and in a more alarming character. In one instance, on the first of January 1831, the attack was so severe as to threaten immediate dissolution. It passed off, however, as former attacks had done, on taking blood from the arm; and soon afterwards he returned to spend the remainder of the evening with the friends whom he had left when the paroxysm came on; and, in his usual cheerful and happy spirit, took his ordinary share, and evinced an undiminished interest, in the conversation.

The morning of that day had been signalized by the extraordinary pathos which he imparted to the religious services, at a prayer-meeting, held, according to annual custom, in the vestry at Broadmead. The intensity of his devotional feelings, and the fervour of his supplications in behalf of the assembled congregation; as well as the glowing affection and deep solemnity with which he

* The youth to whom this letter was addressed went abroad soon after the decease of his father, and intelligence of his death was received in the following December.

addressed them, as he reviewed the past dispensations of Providence, and anticipated some of the probable events of the year now opening upon them, both in relation to them and himself, excited the strongest emotion, and, in connexion with the events that immediately followed, made an indelible impression upon their minds; nearly all his subsequent addresses, whether on the Sunday or the week-day evening services, partook, more or less, of the same pathetic and solemnly anticipatory character. One of the most impressive of these, of which many of the congregation retain a vivid recollection, was delivered on the morning of Sunday, January 16th. The text from which he preached was, Deuteronomy xxxiii. 25: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass: and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

In this discourse he seemed to be preparing his people and himself, for that event by which they were to be deprived of their invaluable pastor, and he to be freed from anguish and sorrow! when his soul, liberated from its chain, and clothed in the Redeemer's righteousness, was to go forth, "first into liberty, then into glory."

A highly valued correspondent,* whose communications greatly enrich this work, enables me to present the following summary of Mr. Hall's application or improvement: which, from its occasion, as well as its excellence, cannot but be read with lively interest.

"Improvement. 1. Take no thought, no anxious, distressing, harassing, thought, for the morrow; suffer not your minds to be torn asunder by doubt or apprehension. Consider, rather, what is the *present* will of God, and rest satisfied and content, without anticipating evils which may never arrive.

"Do not heighten your present sorrows by a morbid imagination. You know not what a day may bring forth. The future is likely to be *better* than you expect, as well as worse. The real victory of Christians arises from *attention to present duty*. This carries them from strength to strength.

"Some are alarmed at the thought of death; they say,

* The Rev. Thomas Grinfield, A.M., of Clifton, near Bristol.

"How shall I meet the agonics of dissolution? But when "you are called to die, you will, if among God's children, "receive dying consolation. Be satisfied if you have the "strength to live to God, and God will support you when "you come to die. Some fear persecution, lest, at such a "season, they should 'make shipwreck of faith and of a "good conscience:' 'As thy day is, such shall thy strength "be.'

"2. Consider to what it is we owe our success. If we "are nearer our salvation than when we believed, let us not "ascribe it to ourselves, to our own arm, but to the grace of "God: 'Not I, but the grace of God with me,' enabling me "to sustain, and to conquer. If we continue, it is 'because "we have obtained help of God:' we are '*kept* by his mighty "power unto salvation.' In all our sufferings, if Christians, "we are perpetually indebted to divine succour.

"3. Let us habitually look up to God, in the exercise of "faith and prayer. Instead of yielding ourselves to dejec-"tion, let us plead the promises, and flee to the Divine "Word. He has been accustomed to sustain the faithful: "and He is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' He "is never weary: Look to Him: 'They that wait on Him "shall mount up with eagles' wings; run, and not be weary, "walk, and not faint.' Go to Him in prayer—cling to His "strength—lay hold of His arm. You have a powerful Re-"deemer: 'be strong in the power of His might!' Draw "down the succours of His grace, which will enable you to "go on, 'from strength to strength,' until you appear before "God in Zion."

It was mercifully ordered, both for Mr. Hall's own comfort, and the gratification and advantage of his flock, that, instead of being long laid aside from public duty (as he sometimes apprehended might be the case), he was enabled to go through the services of the sanctuary almost to the very close of life, without any evident diminution of mental power, and with the benevolent and devotional ardour of spirit which was best calculated, by the divine blessing, to give them their accustomed efficacy. On February 6th, the last Sunday on which he conducted the public worship at Broadmead, he preached two sermons, with the view of enforcing collections in aid of a new chapel that had recently been erected in a part of the city where there was a dense and indigent popu-

lation, for whose religious instruction there had been hitherto no adequate provision. Mr. Hall's own notes of one of those sermons are inserted in the fifth volume. Of the evening sermon I have received an account, which, though it is, avowedly, very imperfect, will, I am persuaded, be regarded as valuable, not only by those whom it will remind of the last instructions of their inestimable pastor, but by many others, who will readily identify the elevated tone of thought and expression of the richly endowed saint, the devoted servant of God, to whose impressive accents they can listen no more.

The text was Luke xii. 15, " *Take heed, and beware of covetousness ;*" in considering which Mr. Hall first endeavoured to show in what covetousness consists ; and, secondly, to trace its baneful influence. Covetousness, he remarked, consists not in the *possession* of wealth, nor simply in the *desire* to possess it. " A desire to possess " wealth with a view to provide for our wants, and those " of our families who are dependent upon us for support, " if kept within due limits, is not only *not* covetousness, " not criminal, but is natural and right."—" If there " were no desire for wealth, there would be no need of it. " It would soon cease to exist at all ; and society would " go back into a state of actual barbarism."—" Covetousness is, properly speaking, the love of money or " other property *for its own sake*, in distinction from the " love of money on account of those necessary things " which it may procure for us." A man may desire money for the purpose of maintaining himself in arms, or for the purpose of extending his pleasures ; but in these cases it is subordinate emotion. There is always risk, however, that a subordinate emotion may become a controlling one ; and, therefore, if that to which the possession of money is made subsidiary is not absolutely criminal, this tendency of our nature must be carefully guarded against, lest, " by the infatuation of sin, men " should go farther than they at first intend, settle down " into the love of money for its own sake, and indulge " the sordid passion of which our Lord exhorts his disciples to beware."

In considering the baleful influence of covetousness on the character, Mr. Hall dwelt upon its tendency to harden the heart, to contract the understanding, to diminish the sense of responsibility, to ruin our happiness by cutting us off from the best gratifications of our nature, and rendering man in great measure a solitary being here, while it unfitted him for bliss hereafter.

In speaking of its tendency to harden the heart, he thus expressed himself:

"The claims of benevolence will be perpetually coming "in contact with this vice. It will, consequently, shut up "the heart against all the addresses of pity; and continu-"ally encrust it with the frost of selfishness. Besides, the "direct and positive love of money can never exist alone. "He who desires wealth for its own sake, will be strongly "disposed to injustice. Hence, his integrity will be liable "to perpetual concussions; it will be constantly assailed "by temptation, constantly exposed to injury. The un-"just balance, the defective weight, and the short measure, "will be found in the possession of the covetous man. He "will be ready to take advantage of the weakness or gene-"rosity of those who surround him. These habits of trifling "with integrity will invariably harden the heart. If the "individual be possessed of power, that power will be em-"ployed for bad purposes. If he occupy a station of trust, "that trust will be abused. If, then, any of you trace in "yourselves the commencement of any of these deviations "from rectitude, by reason of the desire of acquisition, "take warning, and abandon the pursuit *at once,* or all the "consequences of which I have spoken will inevitably fol-"low."

In the latter part of the sermon Mr. Hall exhorted his congregation to consider this vice "in connexion "with death and eternity," nearly in the following words:

"No individual of the human family is exempt from death. "It is a debt that all must pay. Death is a most formidable "foe. His power is irresistible—his attack cannot be re-"pelled, nor can we elude his pursuit. Money can give "you no shelter from this terrible adversary. You cannot "bribe the king of terrors. You cannot purchase a cove-

"nant with the grave. If the bribe were offered it would "be spurned; if the covenant could be made, it would be "broken. Death will strip you of all your possessions. "He will be alike regardless of their glory and their extent.

"Consider, then, how awful is the condition of a covetous "man in relation to futurity! God is the supreme good; "and his favour and service should be esteemed the highest "good and end. But the covetous man makes money his "supreme good, and its acquisition the chief end of his "being. He puts it therefore in the place of God. He "thus becomes an idolater; and in a future world will have "his portion with murderers and liars, 'in the lake that "burneth with fire and brimstone.'

"Now, if there be a word of truth in the New Testa-"ment, some preparation is necessary for a future state. "But what leisure has an avaricious man to prepare for "eternity, when every moment of his time that can be "spared from the seasons allotted to refreshment and re-"pose is occupied in the pursuit of wealth, and the ener-"gies of his mind are entirely bent on its acquisition?

"Can the love of an infinite being have any adequate "place in his bosom? Can there be any true delight in "God, when all his moral perfections are in direct oppo-"sition to this degrading and criminal passion? Can there "be any aspirations after heaven, any sincere desire or "relish for its pleasures and pursuits, or any steady efforts "made to lay up treasure there, when the whole soul is "fixed on the accumulation of riches in the present state? "Can a man love or worship his Maker, when he adores "an earthen idol, and bows down at its feet? Nothing "can be more opposite than these courses of action; and "nothing more contrary to another than the happiness of "heaven and the prevailing love of money. In short, to "use the emphatic and impressive language of Scripture, "'the love of money is the root of all evil.'

"The indulgence of this sinful propensity deprives a man, "not only of present happiness, but of future felicity. Let "me ask, then, most solemnly and affectionately, are there "any covetous persons in the present assembly? Are there "any such here? If so (and you will find no difficulty in "settling this point if you deal faithfully with your own "hearts), then remember that the very earth disowns you, "society expels you from its bosom, enshrouded as you are "in the darkness of your selfishness, the rays of humanity "do not light upon you; much less can the beams of that

"glory in which the Deity resides ever illumine or cheer "your solitary and desolate spirits! You have no hope, un-"less you cease to worship Mammon, and turn in heart and "soul to the true God.

"Remember, that you must shortly appear before the tri-"bunal of that God. There you will have to render your "final account. A God of justice and truth, a Being of "mercy and goodness, will try your actions. When you "stand in his presence you will be divested of all the cir-"cumstances which wealth commands, and appear before "him in the naked simplicity of your moral character. How "unprepared, then, will *you* be to sustain that investigation, "or the scrutiny of his eye, who have made money your "god, and lived and died in the neglect of the blessed and "only Potentate!"

The last service at Broadmead in which Mr. Hall took any part, was the church meeting (when only the members of the church are assembled), on Wednesday, the 9th of February. His closing prayer, on that occasion, is spoken of as most spiritual and elevated, exhibiting in its highest manifestation the peculiar union of humility, benevolence, and fervour, by which his devotional exercises had very long been characterized.

On the next evening, Thursday, the usual monthly sermon, preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper, was to have been delivered; but Mr. Hall's discharge of this duty was prevented by a severe attack of the complaint in his chest, which came on just after he had retired to his study to prepare for that service. This was the commencement of the series of paroxysms which terminated in his dissolution.

"Early on the Sunday morning (I again quote one of the letters of my esteemed friend, Mr. Addington,*) being requested to see him, I found him in a condition of extreme suffering and distress. The pain in his back had been uncommonly severe during the whole night, and compelled him to multiply, at very short intervals, the doses of his

* This gentleman, after he had retired from his professional occupations in London, selected Ashley Court, near Bristol, as his residence, that he might enjoy the privilege of Mr. Hall's ministry at Broadmead.

anodyne, until he had taken no less than 125 grains of solid opium, equal to more than 3,000 drops, or nearly four ounces of laudanum!! This was the only instance in which I had ever seen him at all overcome by the soporific quality of the medicine; and it was, even then, hard to determine whether the effect was owing so much to the quantity administered, as to the unusual circumstance of its not having proved, even for a short time, an effectual antagonist to the pain it was expected to relieve.

"Inured as he was to the endurance of pain, and unaccustomed to any strong expression of complaint, he was forced to confess that his present agony was unparalleled by any thing in his former experience. The opium having failed to assuage his pain, he was compelled to remain in the horizontal posture; but whilst in this situation, a violent attack in his chest took place, which, in its turn, rendered an upright position of the body no less indispensable. The struggle that ensued between these opposing and alike urgent demands became most appalling, and it was difficult to imagine that he could survive it; especially as, from the extreme prostration of vital energy, the remedy by which the latter of those affections had often been mitigated, viz. bleeding, could not be resorted to. Powerful stimulants, such as brandy, opium, æther, and ammonia, were the only resources; and in about an hour from my arrival we had the satisfaction of finding him greatly relieved, and expressing his lively gratitude to God.

"The whole of his demeanour throughout this agonizing crisis, as well as during the remainder of the day, a day of much suffering, exhibited, in a striking degree, the efficacy of Christian faith and hope in supporting and tranquillizing the mind of their possessor, in a season of extreme and torturing affliction. His language abounded with expressions at once of the deepest humility and of thankfulness to God for his 'unspeakable mercies,'—together with affectionate acknowledgments of the care and assiduities of his family and friends around him."

From this time the paroxysms increased rapidly both in frequency and severity; and Mr. Hall, in the intervals between their occurrence, was usually so weak and exhausted, as seldom to be able to converse with those around him. His expressions, however, insulated and broken as they often were, proved that he was able fully to exercise that trust in God which is the grand

principle of religion, and that trusting in him, his soul was kept in peace. No murmuring, no language of irritability, escaped from his lips.

It is not my intention to dwell upon the melancholy detail of the ten days previous to his death. I will only record a few such expressions as serve to show that, acute as were his sufferings, God left him not without support.

Thus, when he first announced his apprehension that he should never again minister among his people, he immediately added, "But I am in God's hands, and I "rejoice that I am. I am God's creature, at his dis-"posal for life or death; and that is a great mercy."

Again, "I have not one anxious thought, either for "life or death. What I dread most are dark days. "But I have had none yet: and I hope I shall not have "any."

Again, "I fear pain more than death. If I could "die easily, I think I would rather go than stay; for I "have seen enough of the world, and I have a humble "hope."

On another occasion, a friend having said to him, 'This God will be our God;' he replied, "Yes, he "will,—he will be our guide even unto death."

On recovering from one of his severe paroxysms, he adverted to the affectionate attentions of his beloved wife and daughters, as well as his numerous comforts, and exclaimed—"What a mercy it is to have so many "alleviations! I might have been deprived of all these "comforts;—I might have been in poverty;—I might "have been the most abject wretch on the face of the "earth."

During one night, in which the attacks were a little mitigated in number and severity, he frequently expressed the most lively gratitude to God, as well as his simple, unshaken reliance on his Saviour; and repeated nearly the whole of Robinson's beautiful hymn—

"Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
 Tune my heart to sing thy grace;
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
 Call for songs of endless praise!" &c.

The same night, under one of his paroxysms, he said to the friend who was with him, "Why should a living "man complain? a man for the punishment of his sins? "I have not complained, have I, Sir?—and I won't "complain."

When Dr. Prichard was invited to join Mr. Chandler and Mr. Addington in consultation, on his arrival Mr. Hall arose and received him so much in his wonted cordial, courteous manner, as, at the first moment, almost to check the apprehension of danger. On the evening of the same day he expatiated on the mercy of God in bringing him to close his life at Bristol.

His prevailing kindness was evinced throughout, in his solicitude for the comfort of those who sat up with him at night, or who remained in the house, to be called to his assistance, if necessary. He also exhorted the members of his family, and others occasionally present, to make religion the chief, the incessant concern; urging, especially upon some of the young among his friends, the duty of openly professing their attachment to Christ and his cause.

When he was a little recovered from one of his severe paroxysms, 'I asked him (says Mr. Chandler) whether he felt much pain.' He replied that his sufferings were great: "but what (he added) are my sufferings to the sufferings of "Christ? His sufferings were infinitely greater: his sufferings were complicated; God has been very merciful to "me—very merciful: I am a poor creature—an unworthy "creature; but God has been very kind—very merciful." He then alluded to the character of the sufferings of crucifixion, remarking how intense and insufferable they must have been, and asked many minute questions on what I might suppose was the process by which crucifixion brought about death. He particularly inquired respecting the effect of pain, the nervous irritation, the thirst, the oppression of breathing, the disturbance of the circulation, and the hurried action of the heart, till the conversation gradually brought him to a consideration of his own distress; when he again reverted to the lightness of his sufferings when contrasted with those of Christ. He spoke of our Lord's "enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself;" of

the ingratitude and unkindness he received from those for whom he went about doing good; of the combination of the mental and corporeal agonies sustained on the cross; the length of time during which our Lord hung; the exhaustion occasioned, &c. He then remarked how differently he had been situated; that though he had endured as much or more than fell to the lot of most men, yet all had been in mercy. I here remarked to him, that with most persons the days of ease and comfort were far more numerous than those of pain and sorrow. He replied, "But I have been a great sufferer in my time; it is, how-"ever, generally true: the dispensations of God have been "merciful to me." He then observed, that a contemplation of the sufferings of Christ was the best antidote against impatience under any troubles we might experience; and recommended me to reflect much on this subject when in pain or distress, or in expectation of death.*

During the whole of this severe illness he read much in Campbell's translation of the Gospels; and at intervals one of his daughters read to him from this version, his favourite to the last.

On the morning of the 21st, the day on which he died, he had it laid before him, as usual, and read it himself in his ordinary recumbent attitude.

Mrs. Hall, in the course of this morning, remarking to him that he appeared better, and expressing her hopes that he would recover; he replied, "Ah! my "dear, let us *hope* for the best, and *prepare* for the "worst." He then stated his opinion that this day would be critical. When his medical attendants met in consultation, a little after noon, he seemed rather better; and Mr. Chandler left him, between one and two, reclining on the sofa, leaning on his elbow with as much muscular energy as ever.

'Before leaving him (he remarks) I explained to him the plan of proceeding to be observed; on which he bowed, saying, that whatever we wished he would comply with, he would do whatever we desired; begging that he might not interfere with my duties to other patients, and adding that he thought he should be very comfortable till my return.

* Chandler's Authentic Account, p. 28.

'In a very short time, and before I reached home, I was summoned to behold the last agonizing scene of this great and extraordinary man. His difficulty of breathing had suddenly increased to a dreadful and final paroxysm. It seems, this last paroxysm came on more gradually than was usual with those which preceded. Mr. Hall finding his breathing become much worse, first rose more on his elbow, then raised his body, supporting himself with his hand, till the increasing agitation obliged him to rise completely on the sofa, and to place his feet in hot water—the usual means he resorted to for relief in every paroxysm. Mrs. Hall observing a fixation of his eyes, and an unusual expression on his countenance, and indeed in his whole manner, became alarmed by the sudden impression that he was dying; and exclaimed in great agitation, "This can't be dying!" when he replied, "It is death—it is death—death! Oh the sufferings of this body!" Mrs. Hall then asking him, "But are you comfortable in your mind?" he immediately answered, "Very comfortable—very comfortable:" and exclaimed, "Come, Lord Jesus—Come"—He then hesitated, as if incapable of bringing out the last word; and one of his daughters, involuntarily as it were, anticipated him by saying, "Quickly!" on which her departing father gave her a look expressive of the most complacent delight.

'On entering his room, I found him sitting on the sofa, surrounded by his lamenting family; with one foot in hot water, and the other spasmodically grasping the edge of the bath; his frame waving in violent, almost convulsive heavings, sufficiently indicative of the process of dissolution. I hastened, though despairingly, to administer such stimulants as might possibly avert the threatening termination of life; and as I sat by his side for this purpose he threw his arm over my shoulders for support, with a look of evident satisfaction, that I was near him. He said to me, "I am dying: "death is come at last: all will now be useless." As I pressed upon him draughts of stimulants, he intimated that he would take them if I wished; but he believed all was useless. On my asking him if he suffered much, he replied, "Dreadfully." The rapidly increasing gasping soon overpowered his ability to swallow, or to speak, except in monosyllables, few in number, which I could not collect; but, whatever might be the degree of his suffering (and great it must have been), there was no failure of his mental vigour or composure. Indeed, so perfect was his consciousness, that in the midst of these last agonies, he intimated to me

very shortly before the close, with his accustomed courteousness, a fear lest he should fatigue me by his pressure; and when his family, one after another gave way in despair, he followed them with sympathizing looks, as they were obliged to be conveyed from the room. This was his last voluntary movement; for immediately, a general convulsion seized him, and he quickly expired.' *

O! how inconceivably blessed is the change, when, at the moment of utmost agony, the soul enters the regions of endless joy; passes from the land of the dying, to the land of the living; from the society of saints to the blissful presence of the King of Saints, where knowledge, illumination, purity, and love, flow for ever and ever from the Inexhaustible Fountain! Such is the ineffable reward which awaits all the faithful followers of the Lamb. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

Nothing, I feel, would be more presumptuous than for me to attempt to portray fully the literary, intellectual, or religious character of my inestimable friend.† I have known, and still know, many whom I greatly value, many whom I cordially love and admire, many from whom I have learnt much and might have learnt more, but for my incapacity to receive what they were ready to impart; but I have known none in whom so many elements of mental and moral greatness were so happily combined as in Mr. Hall; none whose converse and whose diversified knowledge have so constantly interested, charmed, and instructed me; none whose transcendent qualities excited so high and overawing a veneration, yet none, whose humility and cordiality, exquisitely blending with genius and piety, inspired so unhesitating a confidence.

His profound acquaintance with the mind and heart, and his corresponding faculty of tracing and separating

* See Note D. Appendix.

† For some interesting sketches, which together will assist in correctly estimating Mr. Hall's character, see Note E. Appendix.

the springs of human action, gave him an unusual influence with the present race as a sacred orator: while he seems to be one of the few men whose creative intellect, and whose singular ability in the developement of religious truth, and the illustration and confirmation of many principles of universal and increasing interest, qualify them to operate with as extensive an influence in moulding the intellectual and moral character of succeeding generations.

His varied and extraordinary powers, thus diffusively applied to the most momentous subjects, will be seen from his "Works," which are now collected that they may constitute his noblest monument, the most enduring tribute to his memory.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—(See page 61.)

MISCELLANEOUS GLEANINGS FROM MR. HALL'S CONVERSATIONAL REMARKS.

I AM perfectly well aware that no memoranda can convey an adequate idea of the vivacity, originality, and brilliancy of Mr. Hall's conversational powers. It was usually easy to remember the sentiments which he expressed, and sometimes the images, whether sportive or tasteful, by which he illustrated them; but his wit and fancy always lost something of their bloom and freshness on passing through the hands of others, and the beautiful language in which his remarks in conversation were clothed could seldom be recalled, except when he fully communicated his meaning in a very short, but happily turned phrase.

This note, therefore, while it may serve to record some of his sentiments and opinions on interesting topics, must be understood as giving a very faint notion of his manner of expressing himself, except in those cases where the language, at once brief, clear, and characteristic, fixed itself indelibly upon the memory.

The connected series, first presented, has been kindly transmitted by the Rev. Robert Balmer, of Berwick-upon-Tweed, and is selected from his recollection of the substance of three or four conversations which he had with Mr. Hall in the years 1819 and 1823.

In the course of some remarks on various theological writers of our own times, he said, "Dr. Smith is the best "Biblical critic with whom I am personally acquainted; "and I should think him one of the most learned theologians "now alive." On my asking, if he did not consider Archbishop Magee superior in ability, and equal in learning, to Dr. Smith? he replied, with his usual decision, "Not nearly

"equal in learning, Sir; I do not suppose that Archbishop "Magee knows any thing about the German critics, with "whom Dr. Smith is intimately acquainted, and from whom, "notwithstanding all their absurdity and impiety, much may "unquestionably be learned. There is one thing," he added, "in Dr. Smith's work much to be lamented; and that is, "the tone of excessive lenity maintained towards his oppo-"nents. In consequence of this, his reasonings will not "produce an effect proportioned to their intrinsic force; and "his readers are tempted to regard the opinions which he "refutes with far less horror than they deserve. The pro-"per tone in theological controversy is, I imagine, some-"where between Bishop Horsley's intolerable arrogance "and asperity, and Dr. Smith's unwarrantable softness and "urbanity."

On informing him, that I had been perplexed with doubts as to the extent of the death of Christ, and expressing a wish to know his opinion, he replied, "There, Sir, my sentiments "give me the advantage of you; for on that point I entertain "no doubts whatever: I believe firmly in 'general redemp-"tion:' I often preach it, and I consider the fact that "'Christ died for all men' as the only basis that can sup-"port the universal offer of the Gospel?"—'But you admit the doctrine of election, which necessarily implies limitation. Do you not think that election and particular redemption are inseparably connected?'—"I believe firmly," he rejoined, "in election, but I do not think it involves particular re-"demption; I consider the sacrifice of Christ as a remedy, "not only adapted, but intended, for all, and as placing all "in a salvable state; as removing all barriers to their salva-"tion, except such as arise from their own perversity and "depravity. But God knew that none would accept the "remedy, merely of themselves, and therefore, by what may "be regarded as a separate arrangement, he resolved to "glorify his mercy, by effectually applying salvation to a "certain number of our race, through the agency of his "Holy Spirit. I apprehend, then, that the limiting clause "implied in election refers not, to the purchase, but to the "application of redemption." This representation seemed to me at the time to be encumbered with considerable diffi-culties; and I was not sure that I correctly apprehended it. Not choosing, however, to request Mr. H. to repeat or elu-cidate his statements, I asked him if he could refer me to any book where I should find what he regarded as the Scripture doctrine on the subject, stated and illustrated.

He referred me to a book to which Dr. Smith, of Homerton, had, not many days before, referred, in answer to a similar question: "Bellamy's True Religion Delineated."*

In the course of our conversation respecting the extent of Christ's death, Mr. Hall expatiated at considerable length on the number and variety of the Scripture expressions, in which it seems to be either explicitly asserted or necessarily implied, that it was intended not for the elect exclusively, but for mankind generally, such as "the world," "all," "all men," "every man," &c. He made some striking remarks on the danger of twisting such expressions from their natural and obvious import, and on the absurdity of the interpretations put on them by some of the advocates of particular redemption. He mentioned, especially, the absurdity of explaining "the world," John iii. 16, to signify the elect world, as the text would then teach that some of the elect may not believe. He noticed farther, that the doctrine of general redemption was not only asserted expressly in many texts, but pre-supposed in others, such as "Destroy not with thy meat," &c. and "Denying the Lord that bought them;" and that it was incorporated with other parts of the Christian system, particularly with the universal offers and invitations of the Gospel.

On the question of church government, Mr. H.'s sentiments seemed to me undecided and somewhat inconsistent: and by many they would have been regarded as latitudinarian. He expressed his doubts whether any one form or model was delineated in the New Testament, as obligatory in all ages and in all circumstances;† and said, that he was much

* This work was published in America in 1750, with a recommendation from Jonathan Edwards, and in this country in 1806 (a third edition in 1809) under the recommendation of Mr. Fuller. It is now, I regret to say, out of print.

† Mr. Hall held this sentiment in common with many eminent men of different communions; as Archbishops Cranmer and Whitgift; Bishops Bridges and Stillingfleet; Doctors Cosins, Law, Maclaine; Martin Bucer, Zanchy, Brightman, and Hales; and amongst the congregationalists of the present times, that distinguished biblical scholar, Professor Stuart, of Andover, United States, who, in his admirable reply to Channing on religious liberty, says, "We are *congregationalists*, as we profess to be. We have no prejudices, indeed, against the presbyterian or other forms of church government which our brethren of orthodox denominations in this commonwealth, or in any part of our country, see fit to adopt. It is our belief that the gospel has not *prescribed exclusively* any particular form of church government; but that this is left to expediency, as times and circumstances may require."

If this were universally admitted, how much would the true unity of

disposed to adopt the maxim, "Whatever is best administered is best." In another conversation, when mention was made of a church, which, along with its minister, had been guilty of a scandalous irregularity in a matter of discipline, I stated what would be done in such circumstances among Presbyterians, and put the question, Will the neighbouring churches and ministers not interfere? Mr. H. intimated that they ought to remonstrate and advise; but that any claim to jurisdiction would, in his apprehension, be altogether unwarrantable; adding that the independence of churches appeared to him a principle expressly sanctioned by the word of God.

With regard to the question of "Terms of Communion," we had repeated conversations. On this subject he spoke with uncommon interest and animation; and seemed surprised at the arguments of those who were opposed to his views. I recollect, in particular, the effect produced on him, when I stated that I had heard Dr. Lawson, of Selkirk, a man eminent for talents and piety, and still more eminent for his humility and sanctity, declare that he would not admit a Roman Catholic, not even Fenelon or Pascal, to the table of the Lord. Mr. H., who had been previously reclining on three chairs, instantly raised himself on his elbow, and spoke without intermission and with great rapidity for nearly a quarter of an hour; expatiating on the amazing absurdity and presumption of rejecting those whom Christ receives, and of refusing to hold communion on earth with those with whom we hope to associate in heaven. During all this time his manner was exceedingly vehement, his other arm was in continual motion, and his eyes, naturally most piercing, were lighted up with unusual brilliancy.

It was interesting and amusing to observe how Mr. Hall's exquisite sensibility to literary beauty, intermingled with, and qualified the operation of his principles and leanings, both as a Christian and a Dissenter. Of this, I recollect various instances; but shall give only one. While conversing respecting Archbishop Magee, his talents, sentiment, conduct, &c., I quoted, as a proof of his high-church principles, a remark from a charge then newly published: it was to this effect: That the Roman Catholics have a church without a religion; the Dissenters have a religion without

the church, notwithstanding diversity of sentiment on minor points, be promoted, and with it the universal diffusion and reception of Christian truth! See John xvii. 21, 23.

a church; but the Establishment has both a church and a religion. Mr. Hall had never heard the remark before, and was exceedingly struck with it. "That, Sir," he exclaimed, smiling, "is a beautiful saying. I have not heard so fine an "observation for a long time. It is admirable, Sir." 'You admire it, I presume, for its point, not for its truth.' *H.* "I admire it, Sir, for its plausibility and cleverness. It is "false, and yet it seems to contain a mass of truth. It is an "excellent stone for a churchman to pelt with."

After speaking of Antinomians, of whom it appeared there were then several in the neighbourhood of Leicester: "Pray, "Sir," said he, "have you got any Antinomians in Scotland?" 'None,' I replied, 'who avow themselves such. There are individuals in our congregations who have what I consider a morbid aversion to practical preaching, and to a minute enforcement of duty; but almost all our people who know and care any thing about religion will tell you that, although the believer is delivered from the law as a covenant of works, he is subject to it as a rule of life.' "That," said Mr. H., "is precisely what I expected. Your ministers and your "people have too much information to be ensnared by such "impieties. Antinomianism is a monster which can live "only in darkness; bring light on it and it expires."

The following opinions were expressed by Mr. H. respecting various writers in theology. I give them in the form of a dialogue, inserting, of course, such questions and remarks of my own as led to his observations. Let it be remembered at the same time, that they are only fragments, as, in many instances, I do not now recollect more than a third or fourth part of what was said.

B. 'May I ask, Sir, what writers you would most recommend to a young minister.' *H.* "Why, Sir, I feel very in-"competent to give directions on that head; I can only say "that I have learned far more from John Howe than from "any other author I ever read. There is an astonishing "magnificence in his conceptions. He had not the same "perception of the beautiful as of the sublime; and hence "his endless subdivisions." *B.* 'That was the fault of his age.' *H.* "In part, Sir; but he has more of it than many "of the writers of that period; than Barrow, for example, "who was somewhat earlier. There was, I think, an innate "inaptitude in Howe's mind for discerning minute graces "and proprieties, and hence his sentences are often long and "cumbersome. Still he was unquestionably the greatest of "the puritan divines."

After adverting to several of Howe's works, Mr. H. said, in reference to his 'Blessedness of the Righteous:' "Perhaps, Baxter's 'Saint's Rest' is fitted to make a deeper "impression on the majority of readers. Baxter enforces a "particular idea with extraordinary clearness, force, and "earnestness. His appeals to the conscience are irresistible. Howe, again, is distinguished by calmness, self-possession, majesty, and comprehensiveness; and, for my own "part, I decidedly prefer him to Baxter. I admire, exceedingly, his 'Living Temple,' his sermon on the 'Redeemer's "Tears,' &c.; but in my opinion, the best thing he ever "wrote, is his defence of the sincerity of the Gospel offer. "I refer to the treatise called, the 'Reconcilableness of God's "Prescience of the Sins of Men, with his Counsels, Exhortations, and whatever other Means he used to prevent them.' "This I regard as the most profound, the most philosophical, and the most valuable of all Howe's writings."

B. 'Do you think highly of Dr. Owen?' *H.* "No, Sir, "by no means. Have *you* read much of Owen, Sir; do "you admire him?" *B.* 'I have read his preliminary Exercitations to his great work on the Hebrews; his exposition of particular verses here and there; his book on church government; and some of his smaller treatises. I do not greatly admire him, nor have I learned much from him.' *H.* "You "astonish me, Sir, by your patience. You have accomplished a Herculean undertaking in reading Owen's Preliminary Exercitations. To me it is intolerably heavy and "prolix." *B.* 'I do think, Sir, there are many valuable ideas in his writings; but, as a reasoner, he seems to me singularly illogical; for he often takes for granted the thing to be proved.' *H.* "I quite concur with the latter part of your "statement. As a reasoner, Dr. Owen is most illogical; for "he almost always takes for granted what he ought to prove; "while he is always proving what he ought to take for granted; and after a long digression, he concludes very properly "with, 'This is not our concernment,' and returns to enter "on something still farther from the point."

I remarked that Jonathan Edwards's theory was opposed to our consciousness and our indestructible feelings; for whenever we blamed ourselves for having acted wrong, we had an irresistible belief, not only that we could have acted otherwise, if we had chosen, but that we could have willed otherwise. To all this Mr. H. readily assented, adding some remarks respecting two of Edwards's distinctions: the distinction between liberty to will, and liberty to act accord-

ing to our will; and that between natural and moral necessity. Respecting the one of these, (I do not precisely remember which,) Mr. H. made the following ludicrous but characteristic observations:

"That distinction, Sir, lies at the basis of Edwards's "theory; but it is not original. It is to be found in the "works of Dr. Owen: I think it certain that Edwards found "it there, buried, like the rest of Owen's ideas, amid a heap "of rubbish; and finding it there, he did what Owen had "not strength of arm to do, took it by the tail, and dragged "it into light. It proved a monster, and ought to have been "smothered; but Edwards found it would be useful to "frighten the enemies of divine sovereignty and free grace, "and therefore, instead of smothering it, he nursed it."

Mr. Hall made some inquiry respecting Dr. Henry, the historian, once a minister in Berwick, and afterwards colleague of Dr. Macknight, the commentator, in one of the churches in Edinburgh: I informed him that, from all I had ever heard, I believed Dr. Henry must have been a very dry and uninteresting preacher. This led to a reference to the well-known anecdote relative to these two individuals; according to which, the one, when coming to church on a Sabbath morning, having got his clothes wet by a heavy rain, asked his colleague to officiate for him. "Go into the pulpit," said the other, "and you will be dry enough." Some doubt being expressed which of the two it was, to whom this remark was made, Mr. H. observed, "I suppose, Sir, it was applicable to both." Immediately checking himself, he added, "And yet, I should think, that to an intellec-"tual audience, an audience that had any relish for Scrip-"ture exposition, Macknight must have been interesting, if "the discourses which he preached resembled his published "writings." 'Pray, Sir,' I said, 'do you admire Macknight as a commentator?' "Yes, Sir," he replied, "I do very "much; I think it would be exceedingly difficult indeed, to "come after him in expounding the apostolic epistles. I "admit, at the same time, that he has grievous deficiencies: "there is a lamentable want of spirituality and elevation "about him. He never sets his foot in the other world if "he can get a hole to step into in this; and he never gives "a passage a meaning which would render it applicable and "useful in all ages, if he can find in it any local or tempor-"ary allusion. He makes fearful havoc, Sir, of the text on "which you preached to-day. His exposition of it is inimi-"tably absurd." The text referred to was Ephesians i. 8.

" Wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence ;" and the " wisdom and prudence" are explained by Macknight, not of the wisdom of God, as displayed in the scheme of redemption, but of the wisdom and prudence granted to the apostles to enable them to discharge their office.

Mr. Hall repeatedly referred to Dr. ———, and always in terms of great esteem as well as high admiration of his general character; exercising, however, his usual free and independent judgement. The following are some remarks respecting that extraordinary individual: " Pray, Sir, did " you ever know any man who had that singular faculty of " repetition possessed by Dr. ——? Why, Sir, he often re-" iterates the same thing ten or twelve times in the course " of a few pages. Even Burke himself had not so much of " that peculiarity. His mind resembles that optical instru-" ment lately invented; what do you call it?" *B.* ' You mean, I presume, the kaleidoscope.' *H.* " Yes, Sir; an idea " thrown into his mind is just as if thrown into a kaleido-" scope. Every turn presents the object in a new and beau-" tiful form; but the object presented is still the same. Have " you not been struck, Sir, with the degree in which Dr. " —— possesses this faculty?" ' Do you not think, Sir,' I replied, ' that he has either far too much of this faculty, or that he indulges it to a faulty excess?' *H.* " Yes, Sir, certainly; " his mind seems to move on hinges, not on wheels. There " is incessant motion, but no progress. When he was at " Leicester, he preached a most admirable sermon, on the " necessity of immediate repentance; but there were only " two ideas in it, and on these his mind revolved as on a " pivot.

On metaphysics and moral philosophy, we talked at great length; but I cannot now give a tolerable specimen of his acute and eloquent remarks. One of his observations, however, I do remember, which struck me at the time as exceedingly just and happy. Much had been said respecting the utility or inutility of metaphysical studies, and respecting the fact that they as yet had led to no useful discoveries. I made some such remark as this, that, admitting such studies did not terminate in profitable discoveries, still they were advantageous as a field for cultivating and invigorating the mental powers. Mr. H. said, " An *arena*, not a *field*. " Metaphysics yield no fruit. They are not a field, they are " only an arena, to which a man who has got nothing to do, " may go down sometimes, and try his skill in intellectual

"gladiatorship. This, at present, is their chief recommen-"dation."

Of the literary characters respecting whom we conversed, there was none whom he praised so highly as his friend Sir James Mackintosh, and the following fragments will convey some idea of Mr. Hall's estimate of that distinguished and lamented person. "I know no man," he said repeatedly and emphatically, "equal to Sir James in talents. The "powers of his mind are admirably balanced. He is defective "only in imagination." At this last statement, I expressed my surprise, remarking that I never could have suspected that the author of the eloquent oration for Peltier was deficient in fancy. "Well, Sir," said Mr. H., "I don't wonder "at your remark. The truth is, he has imagination too, but, "with him, imagination is an acquisition rather than a "faculty. He has, however, plenty of embellishment at "command; for his memory retains every thing. His mind "is a spacious repository hung round with beautiful images, "and when he wants one he has nothing to do but reach "up his hand to a peg, and take it down. But his images "were not manufactured in his mind; they were imported." *B.* 'If he be so defective in imagination he must be incompetent to describe scenes and delineate characters vividly and graphically; and I should apprehend, therefore, he will not succeed in writing history.' *H.* "Sir, I do not expect "him to produce an eloquent or interesting history. He "has, I fear, mistaken his province. His genius is best "adapted for metaphysical speculation; but had he chosen "moral philosophy, he would probably have surpassed every "living writer." *B.* 'I admired exceedingly some of his philosophical papers in the Edinburgh Review, his articles, for instance, on Madame de Staël's Germany, and on Dugald Stewart's Preliminary Dissertation; but there seemed to me a heaviness about them, and I do think that Mr. Jeffrey could expound a metaphysical theory with more vivacity and effect.' *H.* "With more vivacity perhaps, but not with "equal judgement or acuteness. He would not go so deep, "Sir; I am persuaded that if Sir James Mackintosh had "enjoyed leisure, and had exerted himself, he would have "completely outdone Jeffrey and Stewart, and all the me-"taphysical writers of our times."

Of Dugald Stewart Mr. H. spoke slightingly; and it seemed to me that he was somewhat prejudiced against that amiable and accomplished philosopher, in consequence of unfavourable reports which had reached him respecting

Mr. Stewart's religious sentiments. "He is," said Mr. H., "a pleasing, but a feeble writer. I would never compare "him with any of our great metaphysicians; with Mal-"branche, or Locke, or Berkeley, or even with Tucker. "Reid had a more vigorous and original mind than Stewart; "and Campbell, I suspect, was superior to both. If Camp-"bell had devoted his attention to mental philosophy, he "could have done all that Reid or Stewart had accom-"plished; but neither of them could have written the 'Pre-"liminary Dissertations' to his work on the Gospels. There "is also too much egotism and parade about Dugald Stewart. "He is always polishing away at the corner of a subject; "but he could not rear a system of his own."

This comparison Mr. Hall followed out at considerable length, and in language exceedingly beautiful and magnificent; which, however, I cannot now recall. With regard to Stewart's style, Mr. H. observed, "That it was unques-"tionably one of the finest philosophical styles that ever "was written; that Mr. S. had carried embellishment farther "into the region of metaphysics than any other author that "had preceded him; and that his embellishment was inva-"riably consistent with perfect sobriety of taste."

Of Dr. Thomas Brown, Mr. Hall observed, "That he was "a man of more genius, but less judgement, than his prede-"cessor; that his style, with all its beauties, was far inferior "to Stewart's, as a vehicle for philosophical speculation; that "it was deficient in clearness and precision; and so ex-"ceedingly diffuse, that all that was valuable in the four "volumes of his lectures might be condensed into one." I remarked that Dr. Brown was often the victim of his own ingenuity; that, in point of candour, he was immeasurably inferior to Stewart; that the former would never agree with any writer, if he could possibly differ from him, and that the latter would never differ from any one, if he could possibly agree with him. Mr. Hall acquiesced in substance in these remarks, and proceeded to comment on Dr. B.'s amazing boldness and originality. He characterised briefly several of his lectures, stating that those which had most deeply interested him, and which he thought among the best, were the "Lectures on the Immateriality and Immortality of the Soul."

Mr. H. mentioned that he had read a considerable portion of Kant's works. On my remarking that I knew nothing of that philosopher, except from Dr. Thomas Brown's article upon him, in an early number of the Edinburgh Review, and

from Madame de Staël's book on Germany; that I should suppose his writings to be utterly unintelligible and uninteresting; Mr. H. replied, " It is certainly no great loss to " be ignorant of Kant's works. His philosophy is a system " of scepticism." In answer to his question, " whether I had " read much of Madame de Staël's works," I informed him that I had read her " Remarks on Rousseau," one of her novels, and her book on Germany. *H.* " Did you read her " book on Germany from beginning to end?" *B.* ' I did.' *H.* " I admire your patience more and more, Sir." He added that he had looked into Madame de Staël's Germany; that on finding some philosopher, a well-known idealist, (I cannot at this moment recollect who it was,) spoken of as an opponent to the ideal theory, he had thrown aside the book in disgust; supposing that very little could be learned from a writer so ill informed as to be capable of such a blunder. He seemed very reluctant to allow that many of her remarks were acute and ingenious; and when something was said about the flights of her fancy, he said, " that, for " his part, he could not admire her flights, for to him she " was generally invisible; not because she ascended to a " great height above the earth, but because she invariably " selected a foggy atmosphere."

To the preceding selections from Mr. Balmer's communication, may be added a few of Mr. Hall's remarks, rapidly thrown off on various occasions, some occurring in my own hearing, others taken from the letters of different friends. It may be scarcely necessary to observe that I have not been guided, in my selection, by a desire to exhibit sentiments that coincide with my own, but by a desire still farther to illustrate Mr. Hall's character and manner.

On the return of the Bourbons to France, in 1814, a gentleman called upon Mr. Hall, in the expectation that he would express himself in terms of the utmost delight on account of that signal event. Mr. Hall said, " I am sorry for " it, Sir. The cause of knowledge, science, freedom, and " pure religion, on the Continent, will be thrown back half " a century; the intrigues of the Jesuits will be revived; " and popery will be resumed in France with all its mum- " mery, but with no power, except the power of persecu- " tion." This opinion was expressed about six weeks before the issuing of the Pope's bull for the revival of the order of Jesuits in Europe, 7th August, 1814.

A few years afterwards, Mr. Hall, on an allusion being made to the battle of Waterloo, remarked, "I have scarcely "thought of the unfulfilled prophecies since that event. It "overturned all the interpretations which had been pre-"viously advanced by those who had been thought sound "theologians, and gave new energy to the Pope and the "Jesuits, both of whom seemed rapidly coming to nothing, "as the predictions were understood to teach. That battle, "and its results, appeared to me to put back the clock of "the world six degrees."

Notwithstanding his decided sentiments as a whig and a reformer, he manifested through life a reverence for ancient institutions, rank, and illustrious descent. He was present in Westminster Abbey at Handel's Commemoration, and saw the King (George III.) stand up in one part of the performance of the Messiah, shedding tears. Nothing, he said, had ever affected him more strongly. "It seemed like a great act of national assent to the fundamental truths of religion." He was most accurately acquainted with the descents and dependencies of our principal noble families.

A gentleman expressed his surprise that a celebrated political character, who had avowed *frequent* changes of sentiment, should be so much admired, as he had no principle. Mr. Hall replied, "Why, Sir, probably that is the very rea-"son he is so much admired. He is a conscientious rogue; "that is, he makes a conscience of being a rogue; he is a "rogue upon principle, *for he makes it a principle to have no "principle.*"

"The most effective speaker I ever heard was Dunning. "His voice was unpleasant; but the clearness and force of "the thought and expression produced an effect not to be "surpassed."—'Did you ever hear Fox speak?'—"Yes, "Sir, and his eloquence was wonderfully fine."—'How did it affect you, Sir?'—"As I suppose that of Demosthenes "would: his words were like darts of fire."

Junius's Letters were mentioned. After much speculation as to the author, from various persons, some one cited Dr. Johnson's remark, that none except Edmund Burke could have written them. Mr. Hall remarked—"Burke cer-"tainly could *not* have written them. The style of the two "authors is too opposite for any one to believe them iden-"tical. The talent of Junius shows itself in condensation "and brevity: Burke's *forte* is amplification. Junius is "cool and deliberate: Burke was impassioned and ener-"getic. Junius is remarkable for his caustic satire: Burke,

"for rampant and vehement abuse. The diction of Burke "is modern and latinized; while the writings of Junius "afford a singular illustration of the excellence and force of "the original English language;—he employs no latinized "words, and has exhibited a full and most forcible style, "composed almost entirely of words of Saxon derivation. "The man who could write as Burke did, could not so dis-"guise his style as to bring it into any continued similarity "to that of Junius. The character of the men, too, was "essentially different: there is no generosity in Junius. "His caustic satire was, in character, like that of Horne "Tooke, whose very calmness was irresistible; yet no think-"ing man identifies Junius with Tooke."

In conversation about thirty years ago, an acute, but bitter-spirited political writer being mentioned, Mr. Hall was asked if he had ever noticed the singularly conical formation of that writer's head? "Yes, Sir," he replied, "it "is a remarkable head in its structure, very remarkable; "but what a *face*, Sir! Did you ever see another such a "face? *It is the rendezvous of all the vices, Sir.*"

On being asked if he had read the life of Bishop Watson, then (in 1818) recently published, he replied that he had, and regretted it, as it had lowered his estimate of the bishop's character. Being asked, why? he expressed his reluctance to enlarge upon the subject; but added, "Poor man, I "pity him! He married public virtue in his early days, "but seemed for ever afterwards to be quarrelling with his "wife."

A clergyman, who had just before been at one of the late Archbishop of Canterbury's public dinners, at Lambeth, mentioned that the Archbishop's chaplain "said grace" both before and after dinner. Mr. Hall observed that "it must "have been a very gratifying mark of respect to the chap-"lain, when sitting at the same table.' 'You are under a mistake,' said the clergyman, 'the chaplain did not dine at the same table, but in another room, from which he was called in twice, to say grace.' Mr. Hall, after using two or three terms of astonishment, which I cannot now recall, added—"So that is being great! His Grace, not choosing "to present his own requests to the King of kings, calls in a "deputy to take up his messages. A great man, indeed! "A very great man!" *

* This anecdote, which has been preserved simply as an additional example of Mr. Hall's manner of dismissing an unbecoming practice, on which he did not wish to dwell, by a few ironical expressions,

Hearing of a person whose property had rapidly wasted, and who had concealed the state of his affairs from his family, which had from mere ignorance been subjected to great inconvenience:—"Concealment, Sir," Mr. Hall replied, "has ruined thousands. A reserved man, Sir, misses it in "his actions; an open man in his words. Ruin is inevita-"ble in the first case, and often risked in the second."

"In matters of conscience *first* thoughts are best; in "matters of prudence *last* thoughts are best."

On being informed that a lady when asked to subscribe to a certain charitable institution, said 'she would wait and see,' Mr. Hall said "that is not 'watching to do good,' but watching to escape from it."

"The head of Mr. ———, (a neighbouring minister,) is "so full of everything but religion, that it seems difficult to "account for his continuing to preach: one might be tempt-"ed to fancy that he has a Sunday soul, which he screws "on in due time, and takes off again every Monday morn-"ing."

'What do you think, Sir, of Tom Paine's attack upon the Bible?' "I think it as ineffably weak and ridiculous as it "would be for a mouse to attempt to nibble off the wing of "an archangel."

'What do you think of the Ranters, Mr. Hall? Don't you think they ought to be put down?' "I don't know "enough of their conduct to say that. What do they do? "Do they inculcate Antinomianism, or do they exhibit im-"morality in their lives?" 'Not that I know of; but they fall into very irregular practices.' "Indeed! what prac-"tices?" 'Why, Sir, when they enter a village, they begin to sing hymns, and they go on singing until they collect a number of people about them, on the village green, or in some neighbouring field, and then they preach. "Well; "whether that may be *prudent* or *expedient*, or not, depends "upon circumstances; but, as yet, I see no criminality." 'But you *must* admit, Mr. Hall, that it is *very irregular.*' "And suppose I do admit that, what follows? Was not "our Lord's rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees, and driving "the buyers and sellers out of the temple, *very irregular?*

seems to be regarded, by a writer in the Christian Observer (*Nov.* 1833), as a very inconsiderate attack, not resting in fact, upon the heads of the Anglican church. To this I simply reply that before I published the anecdote I ascertained the existence of the practice, by inquiry of several clergymen, all of whom admitted it, and some condemning it, while others defended it as only a proper ceremonial on state occasions.

"Was not almost all that he did in his public ministry *very* "*irregular?* Was not the course of the Apostles and of "Stephen, and of many of the Evangelists, *very irregular?* "Were not the proceedings of Calvin, Luther, and of their "fellow-workers in the Reformation, *very irregular?*—a "complete and shocking innovation upon all the quiescent "doings of the papists? And were not the whole lives of "Whitfield and Wesley *very irregular* lives, as you view "such things? Yet how infinitely is the world indebted to "all of these? No, Sir: there must be something widely "different from mere irregularity before I can condemn."

Mr. Hall, being asked his opinion of the French popular preachers, said, "Many of them have great talent; but they "are all too rhetorical and artificial, and artifice in the pul-"pit is most odious." 'What is your opinion, Sir, of Saurin?' "He is decidedly inferior to Massillon and Bossuet, "both in the general structure of his sermons, and in all the "higher flights of oratory. His sermons are too fine, have "too much display, and scarcely ever give due prominence "to 'Christ and the Cross.' A *page* of Pascal's thoughts, "is worth more in my estimation than a *volume* of Saurin's "Sermons."

"The scheme may not seem at first sight to promise much "success; but in my opinion, Missionary Societies should "be formed in churches; every church, possessing the "means, should feel itself bound, not merely to maintain "religious teaching and worship internally, but, also, *as a* "*church,* to promote the dissemination of religion around. "I think that a church ought to maintain not only a pastor "for itself; but, at the same time, an evangelist to preach "the gospel where it is not known. This would in a few "years, banish heathenism from christian countries, teach "us the best mode of attacking it in foreign countries, and "would be promoting religion in a religious way."

Being led to speak of Mrs. Hannah More, he said, "Her "style in early life was always suited to the subject and to "the occasion; as in her Thoughts on the Manners of the "Great, and her Cheap Repository Tracts; and her writings "have, doubtless, done much good. But in her later works "her style has become exceedingly faulty: it exhibits a "constant affectation of point. She fatigues one with per-"petual antithesis, and that, not of ideas, but of words. I "consider Miss Edgeworth's style as far superior. She is "simple and elegant; content to convey her thoughts in "their most plain and natural form. This is, indeed, the

"perfection of style. As that piece of glass is the most "perfect, through which objects are seen so clearly, that the "medium, the glass itself, is not perceived; so, that style is "most perfect which makes itself forgotten. Such is the "character of Miss Edgeworth's style."

He was asked his opinion of the moral tendency of Miss Edgeworth's works. "In point of tendency, I should class "her writings among the most irreligious I ever read. Not "from any desire she evinces to do mischief, or to unsettle "the mind, like some of the insidious infidels of the last cen-"tury; not so much from any direct attack she makes upon "religion, as from a universal and studied omission of the "subject. In her writings a very high strain of morality is "assumed: she delineates the most virtuous characters, and "represents them in the most affecting circumstances of "life,—in sickness, in distress, even in the immediate pros-"pect of eternity, and finally sends them off the stage with "their virtue unsullied:—and all this without the remotest "allusion to Christianity, the only true religion. Thus, she "does not attack religion, or inveigh against it, but makes "it appear unnecessary, by exhibiting perfect virtue without "it. No works ever produced so bad an effect on my own "mind as hers. I did not expect any irreligion there: I was "off my guard; their moral character beguiled me; I read "volume after volume with eagerness, and the evil effect of "them I experienced for weeks. I have been told that she "was once asked her motive for delineating a merely ideal "morality without reference to religion. She replied, that "if she had written for the lower classes she should have "recommended religion; but that she wrote for a class for "whom this was less necessary. She seemed to think that "the virtues of the higher orders of society were so exalted "as to need no assistance from religion, which was only de-"signed as a curb or muzzle for the lower brutes who could "not be managed without it. Happily for the world, Mrs. "More never fell into that grievous mistake."

Some questions were asked of him as to Mrs. More's conversation. He said, "So far as I can judge, she talks but "little on ordinary occasions; and when she speaks, it is "generally to utter some sententious remark." A lady pre-"sent inquired, if there was anything particularly *striking* in Mrs. More's manners. "Nothing striking, Ma'am, cer-"tainly not. Her manners are too perfectly proper to be "striking. *Striking* manners are *bad* manners you know, "Ma'am. She is a perfect lady, and studiously avoids those

" peculiarities and eccentricities which constitute striking " manners."

More than once have I heard him, with affectionate respect, mention Dr. Ryder, the bishop of Lichfield, whom he had known as a pious aud useful parish clergyman in the neighbourhood of Leicester. " He has not been injured," said Mr. Hall, " by promotion; he is the same man as a " bishop, that he was as the laborious parish priest; to such " a bishop we may apply the apocalyptic title, 'an angel of " the church.' We may say of him what St. John says of " Demetrius, that he 'has good report of all men, and of the " truth itself.' "

'What did you think, Sir, of Mr. Scott's Reply to Bishop Tomline's Refutation of Calvinism?' " I thought it com- " plete in its kind. He razed the bishop's arguments to " their very foundations; and would have ploughed over " them, so that no vestige of them should afterwards be dis- " covered, had not he found something better to do."

'What is your opinion of his Commentary?' " Mr. Ful- " ler used to say that it had more of *the mind of the Spirit* " than any other; and though I cannot go quite so far as " that, I think it very valuable as a book of reference, free " from fancies, and abounding with good sense and sound " instruction. Matthew Henry's has more genius and beau- " ty, and is very popular and delightful for daily reading." 'But is not Scott's prolix?' " It may be so. Yet I cannot " say I ever found it so. There is no display in it; and " that always has a great charm with me." 'But you seem inclined to admit that it is void of taste, if not rude in structure.' " Why, as to that, Mr. Scott set before you fine " blocks of marble. He did not stop to polish any of them, " or to chisel them down into ornamental forms, but went " off again to the quarry to hew out another block."

He did not like Dr. Gill as an author. When Mr. Christmas Evans was in Bristol, he was talking to Mr. Hall about the Welsh language, which he said was very copious and expressive. 'How I wish, Mr. Hall, that Dr. Gill's works had been written in Welsh.' " I wish they had, Sir; I wish " they had, with all my heart; for then I should never have " read them. They are a continent of mud, Sir."

" Jonathan Edwards unites comprehensiveness of view, " with minuteness of investigation, beyond any writer I am " acquainted with. He was the greatest of the sons of " men. He has none of the graces of writing, I admit: he " was acquainted with no *grace*, but *divine*."

A gentleman, speaking of the late Andrew Fuller, remarked that though he had written very strongly against Ultra-Calvinism, he had scarcely ever heard him exhort sinners with any degree of earnestness from the pulpit. Mr. Hall observed, that when he *did* make appeals of the kind adverted to, they were so deeply impressive as to excite regret that they were not more frequent. 'How do you account, Sir, for their occurring so seldom?' Mr. Hall seemed disinclined to enter seriously upon the subject; but replied, "Why, Sir, I suppose that occasionally he had to struggle "with the feelings of an assassin. He knew that he had "murdered Antinomianism, and at such times he was haunt-"ed by its ghost."

A popular divine being engaged to preach at Bristol, Mr. Hall intended to hear him, but was prevented by indisposition. A gentleman, however, who had attended the service, called upon Mr. Hall in his way home, and told him he had been greatly delighted and edified. "I have no doubt "of that, Sir (said Mr. Hall); but pray what was the doc-"tor's text?" 'It was Heb. ii. 3: *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*' "A very fine subject, Sir; "how did the doctor treat it?" 'Why, Sir, he began by saying he should consider, first, Why it was called a *great* salvation? And, in the first place, it was called a *great* salvation because *God was the Author of it.*' "Impossible, "Sir, impossible! You must have misunderstood the doc-"tor, Sir; he could not have said that, Sir. God is the Au-"thor of the minutest and meanest insects: He is the Author "*even of a flea*, you know, Sir."

John Wesley having been mentioned, he said, "The most "extraordinary thing about him was, that while he set all in "motion, he was himself perfectly calm and phlegmatic: "he was the quiescence of turbulence."

He spoke of Whitfield as presenting a contrast in the mediocrity of his writings to the wonderful power of his preaching: of the latter there could be no doubt, however; but it was of a kind not to be represented in writing; "it is im-"possible to paint eloquence."

Speaking of Mr. ——'s composition: "Yes, it is very "elegant, but very cold; it is the beauty of frost."

Some one observing to Mr. Hall that his animation increased with his years—"Indeed: then I am like touch-"wood; the more decayed, the easier fired."

In 1829 I lent Mr. Hall the volume, then just published, entitled, "The Natural History of Enthusiasm." I had ex-

pected that he would be delighted by so acute and original an essay. But he disappointed me here. On my inquiring how he liked it; "Not much, Sir," he answered. 'Why, Sir, it is considered a very clever book.' "Oh, yes, Sir, it is "clever enough in its way; but there is no *repose* in it: I "found it only fret and harass my mind to read much of it. "The style is not natural to the author, but is assumed, I "suspect, to keep up his disguise; and there is, in conse-"quence, a want of clearness in it, as well as in the train of "thought. The author does not *settle* my mind. He is right, "however, in his definition of enthusiasm, as a word which "is now always to be taken in a bad sense, as denoting an "*extravagant* view of the subject.

'Have you read Pollok's Course of Time, Mr. Hall?' "Only some portions of it, Sir. It is not at all to my taste. "The author's age and circumstances excite sympathy, but "that should not be confounded with admiration." 'But some of the reviewers, Sir, compare Pollok with Milton.' "I have no patience with such absurdity. Pollok is no "more to be compared with Milton than the manners of a "clown with those of a prince."

Lord Byron was mentioned. "I tried to read Childe "Harold, but could not get on, and gave it up."—'Have you read the fourth canto, Sir, which is by far the best?' "Oh no, Sir, I shall never think of trying." 'But, Sir, independently of the mere poetry, it must be interesting to contemplate such a remarkable mind as Lord Byron's.' "It "is well enough to have a general acquaintance with such "a character; but I know not why we should take plea-"sure in minutely investigating deformity."

In reply to some observations from a gentleman who had erroneously inferred the inutility of all forms and modes of religious worship, from the fact that worship too often sunk into mere formality, Mr. Hall expressed himself nearly as follows:—

"You seem to think, Sir, because we often see the form "of religion without the power, that it would be better to "be without forms altogether. But that is a great mistake. "Where there is a power there *will be* a form: and while "we are in the present embodied state religion requires a "form, a something by which it may become visible to "others, and so extend its influence. Every state of mind, "you know, Sir, shows itself. Gratitude shows itself in "the language and actions of praise; benevolence in out-"ward acts of kindness; affection in indications of love;

"a thirst for knowledge by search and inquiry; and in all "these, and many others, while the soul remains in the "body, the eye, the tongue, the voice, the hand, the body "indeed, must be the minister of its actions. Besides, Sir, "as we are by our very constitution social creatures, our "principles and our feelings must exhibit themselves in our "social intercourse, must assume a social *form;* and so, "therefore, must our *religious* principles and feelings. In "all deep and strong feeling we naturally seek participants, "and its outward form manifests its existence. So if reli-"gion have a principle in society, it must, it will, take an "outward form; and public worship becomes necessary, "that they who fear God may give evidence of that fear, "by frequenting the holy assembly. No, Sir; the public "ceremonial of religion may degenerate into mere pom-"posity and pageantry, or may fail in its object, from ap-"pealing to the senses instead of the understanding and "the heart; it may bewilder by its complexity, or fatigue "by its length; but this only serves to show that the best "things are liable to abuse and perversion. Forms are ne-"cessary, notwithstanding; and they most fully answer "their purpose, as means of grace (for such they really "are), when they are constructed with a direct view to our "nature as men, and our wants as Christians."

NOTE B.—[See page 77.]

Quotations from the Writings of Sir James Mackintosh and Dr. Parr, relative to Mr. Hall.

1. *Extracts from a Review of Mr. Hall's Sermon on Modern Infidelity, written by Sir James Mackintosh. Published in the Monthly Review for February,* 1800.

As far as philosophy and eloquence can make a publication important, and as far as very peculiar circumstances can render it interesting, certainly no sermon of our times merits a more elaborate criticism than that of Mr. Hall.

A new set of Infidels has arisen in this age, who, with a

boldness unknown to their predecessors, not only reject religion as *false,* but condemn it as *pernicious.* The great majority of former unbelievers were so far from denying its *usefulness,* that they represented it as an invention of statesmen, for the very purpose of giving aid to morality and efficacy to the laws; but some of our modern infidels declare open war against every principle and form of religion, natural as well as revealed, as hostile to morality, and therefore destructive of the happiness of the human race. This extravagant and detestable paradox, which long lay neglected in the forgotten volumes of Cardan and Spinoza, is now revived and disseminated by men who possess the dangerous art of making paradoxes popular. Notwithstanding its evident and monstrous absurdity, it has gained many proselytes on the continent of Europe; and a few, we fear, even in this fortunate island; which, as it was the first country that was seized with the disease of infidelity, was the first also which was completely cured of that pestilential malady. Against this new sect a most vigorous and formidable attack is made in the sermon before us, by Mr. Hall, the pastor of a dissenting congregation at Cambridge; who, in his preface, most earnestly deprecates all contentions between different sects of Christians in the presence of the common enemy; and who speaks of his being a dissenter only as a motive for generous emulation, and for vying with the church in zeal and vigour in defence of our common Christianity, in imitation of the ablest and most virtuous dissenters of former times.

"When, at the distance of more than half a century, Christianity was assaulted by a *Woolston*, a *Tindal*, and a *Morgan*, it was ably supported both by clergymen of the established church, and writers among Protestant dissenters. The labours of a *Clarke* and a *Butler* were associated with those of a *Doddridge*, a *Leland*, and a *Lardner*, with such equal reputation and success, as to make it evident that the intrinsic excellence of religion needs not the aid of external appendages; but that, with or without a dowry, her charms are of sufficient power to fix and engage the heart."

Happy will it be if this passage shall produce its proper effects both on the dissenters and on the clergy of the establishment; if it shall animate the former to a noble rivalship of exertion in the general cause of religion; and if it shall dispose the latter to view the dissenters no longer with suspicion on account of theological differences of inferior

moment, and of *supposed* political differences, but to regard them with the affection which is due to fellow-christians, and fellow-soldiers in the army of religion and of truth. Unfortunate animosities and fatal suspicions have arisen between them, from causes which were, perhaps, irresistible. Neither party, probably, is entirely blameless. If the dissenters, following the example of Mr. Hall, will sacrifice the pride of a sect to the cause of religion, they will at least have the merit of making a fair experiment on the temper of the church; and it will be ascertained whether the established clergy of our days will receive the successors of Leland and Lardner, as these illustrious men were received by the most distinguished prelates of their times. We have no doubt that the experiment would be successful, and that the result of such an amicable struggle would be a new triumph for Christianity, both in the defeat of her enemies, and in the closer union of all her children, in the establishment of christian truth, and in the diffusion of christian charity: so that infidelity may at length not only be exposed, but shamed and silenced, and those sects which continue to differ in inferior questions of opinion and discipline, may at least agree in forbearance and mutual kindness. Mr. Hall has shown the example to his brethren, and held out the invitation to those from whom he dissents. He has done his duty to his country and to his religion, and he has done it nobly. Let us hope that he has not sown his seed in a barren soil.

Though Mr. Hall, however, in our opinion, has victoriously established his principle with respect to this part of the subject [the power of religion in producing the higher class of virtues], he is with reason convinced that the *indirect* influence of religion, as it enters into our sentiments and forms our character, is much more extensive and important than its *direct* influence, as arising from a deliberate regard to the happiness or misery of another life, and from its fitness to fill up that chasm that is founded merely on the utility of virtue in the present world. It is on the subject of the *indirect* influence of religion, that he has chiefly displayed all the powers of his vigorous understanding, and all the stores of his richly endowed mind. It is here that he exhibits an union of comprehensive philosophy with animated and splendid eloquence, of which few other examples are to be found. It is here, on a subject which has been discussed and (it might have been thought) exhausted by the greatest men of many suc-

cessive ages, that Mr. Hall has given the most decisive proof of his genius, by many arguments and reflections which are at once original, just, and profound. Those who are familiar with moral discussions know the extreme difficulty of producing even a *new paradox*, on subjects which have so often and so long employed all the powers of the human understanding. It is easy for men of sense to deliver very important moral truths, if they will content themselves with repeating and enforcing what has been often said before; which we are far from denying to be very useful, and indeed absolutely necessary. It is possible, though not easy, for men of ingenuity, if they merely seek singularity, and throw off all regard to truth and the interests of mankind, to discover some new path in the wilderness of error which no former hunter of paradoxes had explored. To be *original* and *just*, however, is on all subjects very difficult; and it is a mark of the highest superiority of understanding, when displayed on a subject which seemed so nearly exhausted as the connexion between morality and religion.

If we were to indulge our own feelings without regard to the limits of our review, we should scarcely know when to finish our extracts, or how to bound our praises. This sermon, indeed, is in every respect entitled to rank among the first productions of the age. It is distinguished by solid and profound philosophy; the very reverse of that sorry and shallow sophistry which has of late usurped the name. It breathes a spirit of humility, piety, and charity; worthy of that pure and divine religion, to the defence of which the author has consecrated his talents. His eloquence is not a puny and gaudy bauble, fashioned by the tools and tricks of a mechanical rhetorician; it is the natural effusion of a fertile imagination, of an ardent mind, and of a heart glowing with zeal for truth, with reverence for God, and with love for men. His style is easy, various, and animated; not free, indeed, from those petty incorrectnesses which seem to be scarcely separable from natural composition, but perfectly exempt from affectation, a blemish far more unpardonable than negligence, and into which those who too studiously avoid carelessness have in general been too liable to fall. On a review of all his various excellences, we cannot but expect with confidence that the name of Mr. Hall will be placed by posterity, with the illustrious names of Paley and of Watson, among the best writers of the age, as well as the most vigorous defenders of religious truth and the brightest examples of Christian charity.

2. *From Sir James Mackintosh's Review of Proceedings in the Case of Benjamin Flower. British Critic, August* 1800.

He tells us in his preface, "There is no one living more "guarded in bringing unsubstantial charges than myself." p. 17. He also observes, that "the mere change of senti- "ment is not in itself criminal, it is sometimes virtuous." p. 22. After these declarations, we should of course have expected that he would not have applied the most contumelious and opprobrious language to virtuous men, on no better pretext than that of a "mere change of sentiment." As this "change" might be "virtuous," all "charges" founded only upon it must be "unsubstantiated." Now mark the conduct of this man, and let him be tried by his own principles. Mr. Hall, his townsman, and, as we understand, formerly his pastor, is well known to have lately published a most admirable Sermon, in which he employed all the powers of reason, and all the vigour and splendour of eloquence, in displaying the abominable consequences of Atheism. "*The very head and front of his offending hath* "*this extent, no farther.*" His whole guilt consisted in this: that, being a minister of Christianity, he had the *illiberality* and cruelty to attack poor Atheism, and its meek and unbloody apostles, the amiable French republicans. For this great crime this miserable scribbler attempts to raise a louder clamour against Mr. Hall than has been raised against other dissenting ministers for renouncing their belief in God. Bishops may be libelled, kings may be slandered, all laws, human and divine, may be insulted and reviled; but France and Atheism are sacred things, which it seems no Englishman, or at least no dissenting minister, is to attack with impunity; which he cannot reason against without having his character stigmatized as a time-server; the warm language of his youth cited against his more mature opinions: and all the prejudices of his sect, or even of his congregation, artfully inflamed against his good name, his professional usefulness, and perhaps his professional existence. The black and fell malignity which pervades this man's attack on Mr. Hall raises it to a sort of diabolical importance, of which its folly, and ignorance, and vulgarity, cannot entirely deprive it. This must be our excuse for stooping so low as to examine it.

His first charge is, that Mr. Hall now speaks of the French

Revolution in different language from that which he used in 1793. How many men have retained the same opinions on that subject? There may be some, and Mr. Benjamin Flower may be one; for there are men who have hearts too hard to be moved by crimes, or heads too stupid to be instructed by experience. The second accusation against Mr. Hall is, that he has imputed a great part of the horrors of the last ten years to the immoral, antisocial, and barbarising spirit of Atheism. Will this man deny, on principles of reason, that Atheism has such a tendency? If he does, what becomes of his pretended zeal for religion? Or will he, on the authority of experience, deny that Atheism has actually produced such effects? If he does, we refer him, not to Professor Robison, or the Abbé Barruel, of whose labours he, as might be expected, speaks with real rancour and affected contempt; but to the works of Atheists and anarchists themselves, which he will think much better authority. Has he read the correspondence of Voltaire, of Diderot, of D'Alembert? Has he consulted any of the publications which have issued during the last ten years from the Paris press? Does he know that all the fanatical Atheists of Europe (and England is not free from this pest) almost publicly boast that in thirty years no man in a civilized country will believe in God? Has he never heard that the miners of Cornwall were instigated to sell their clothes in order to purchase the impious ravings of Tom Paine; or that they were gratuitously distributed among the people of Scotland, with such fatal effects, that a large body of that once religious people made a bonfire of their Bibles, in honour of the new apostle? Has he been informed that the London Corresponding Society (enlightened by the *Système de la Nature*, of which the translation was hawked in penny numbers at every stall in the Metropolis) deliberated whether they ought not to uncitizen Tom Paine, for superstitiously professing *some* belief in the existence of God? DOES HE KNOW THAT THE SAME SOCIETY RESOLVED, THAT THE BELIEF OF A GOD WAS SO PERNICIOUS AN OPINION, AS TO BE AN EXCEPTION TO THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF TOLERATION? Does he perceive the mischievous and infernal art with which only Deism is preached to the deluded peasantry of Scotland, while Atheism is reserved for the more illuminated ruffians of London? ALL THIS, AND PROBABLY MUCH MORE, WE FEAR HE KNOWS BUT TOO WELL! Yet it is in the midst of these symptoms of a meditated revolt against all religion, and of bloody persecution practised wherever Atheists are strong, and projected where they are weak,

against the Christian worship, and all its ministers of all sects and persuasions, that this man has the effrontery to make it a matter of accusation against Mr. Hall, that he exhorted nonconformists, *not to abandon their dissent*, but merely to unite their efforts with those of the church, in resisting the progress of Atheism. He, it seems, hates the church more than he loves religion. He has more zeal for dissent than for the belief of the existence of a Deity. His pious zeal would prefer slavery, under the disciples of *Condorcet* and *Volney*, to a temporary co-operation with the church which produced *Taylor* and *Barrow!* That such should be the sentiments of an obscure scribbler, is a matter of small moment; though, notwithstanding his complaints of the state of the press, this is the first time, since England was a nation, that any man would have dared to publish them. But that such should be the sentiments of a numerous sect continuing to call themselves Christians, would indeed be a matter of very serious consideration. But it cannot be. The body of Dissenters will hasten to disavow such detestable sentiments. They will acknowledge as their representative, not this libeller, but the eloquent and philosophical preacher whom he has so foully slandered; whom no dissenting minister has surpassed in talents, and whom none has equalled or even nearly approached in taste and elegance of composition.

---

3. *From the Notes to Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon.*
Easter, 1800.

After defending Mr. Hall from the censures of those who blamed him for styling Hooker "great and judicious," he proceeds thus:

In common with all men of letters, I read with exquisite delight Mr. Hall's sermon, lately published. As compositions, his former works are replete with excellence; but his last approaches to perfection, *μετα τον σεμνου την χαριν ἐχει.* He apologizes for its length, but the apology was unnecessary: for every man of taste and virtue will apply to this publication, what Photius said upon the *λειμωναριον* of Joannes Moschus, *ἐξ ἀπαντων το χρησιμον ὁ συνετος και ὁ θεοφιλης ἀνηρ δρεπομενος, ουκ ἀν των συντεταγμενων κορον καταγνοιη.* Bacon tells us that "the contemplative Atheist is rare, and that the Atheist did never perturb states,

because it makes men weary of themselves as looking no farther." But I agree with Mr. Hall, that "the present times furnish a melancholy exception to this general observation;" and Mr. Hall will probably agree with Bacon, "that superstition also has been the confusion of many states, and bringeth in a new primum mobile, that ravisheth all the spheres of government." (Bacon's 17th and 18th Essays.) The liveliness of Mr. Hall's imagination, and the strength of his feelings, may now and then have led him to speak rather too strongly in each of his late publications. In the former [the Apology for the Freedom of the Press], I thought that he ascribed too much to the effects of Popery under the French monarchy; and, in the latter, too much to the effects of philosophy in the French Revolution. But, in both works, he has made many wise and interesting observations; in both he has preserved a most beautiful and animated style; through both he has been actuated, I believe, by the purest motives; and by the last more especially, he has deserved well from every friend to civilized society and pure religion. I am not sure that Mr. Hall stands in need of any vindication upon the score of inconsistency; but I *am* sure that he is most able to vindicate himself against accusations really strong, if such there be, and I am equally sure that he has too much candour and too much magnanimity to persist in any error, which his own sagacity may discover, or the objections of his antagonists shall clearly prove.

Having stated my wishes, that in a few, I mean a very few, instances, Mr. Hall had been a little more wary in pushing his principles to consequences, which they may not quite warrant, I will give my general opinion of him in the words that were employed to describe a prelate, whose writings, I believe, are familiar to him, and whom he strongly resembles, not perhaps in variety of learning, but in fertility of imagination, in vigour of thinking, in rectitude of intention, and holiness of life. Yes, Mr. Hall, like Bishop Taylor, "has the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, and the piety of a saint."

Sincere as my attachment is to Protestantism, I confess that I have been pained by some outrageous invectives that have been lately thrown out against the church of Rome; and at the present crisis, I must further confess, that they appear to me not only unjust, but indiscreet, and even inhuman. Let me remind the accusers of Mr. Hall, that, in the estimation of Lord Bacon, "divisions in religion, if they

be many, introduce Atheism;"—"that there is a superstition in avoiding superstition, when men think they do best by going farthest from what they think the superstition formerly received; and, therefore, care should be had that the good be not taken away with the bad, which commonly is done when the people is the reformer." Among those who censure Mr. Hall, there may be thoughtless and injudicious persons, who often repeat the witty and decisive answer of Sir Henry Wotton to the priest, who asked, "Where was your religion to be found before Luther?" Let me then recall to their memory the advice which Sir Henry gave to one, whose earnestness exceeded his knowledge, and who was perpetually railing against the Papists: "Pray, Sir, forbear, till you have studied the points better; for the wise Italians have this proverb, '*He that understandeth amiss concludes worse;*' and take heed of thinking, the farther you go from the Church of Rome, the nearer you are to God." To men of sounder judgement and more candid dispositions, I would recommend the serious perusal of "Cassandri Consultatio," of Grotius's notes upon it, and his three replies to Rivetus. When they read the "Syllabus Librorum et Epistolarum doctorum aliquot et priorum virorum," in the third volume of Grotius's works, they may cease to think Mr. Hall singular, when he remarks, in his preface, "How trivial, for "the most part, are the controversies of Christians with each "other!" They may be disposed to join him in his prayer, that "Ephraim may no longer vex Judah, nor Judah Ephraim;" and they may be converted to the wise and salutary opinion of Grotius, "Quam non sit difficilis in Religione Conciliatio, si controvertendi studium vitetur!"

NOTE C.—[See page 102.]

Character of Mr. Hall as a Preacher.

From the London Magazine, No. XIV. Feb. 1, 1821. *Written by the Editor, Mr. John Scott, Author of "Visits to Paris," &c.*

Some of them (the dissenting ministers) are, at the present

day, exhibiting no ordinary gifts and energies; and to the most distinguished of these we propose to direct the attention of our readers.

Mr. Hall, though perhaps the most distinguished ornament of the Calvinistic* dissenters, does not afford the best opportunity for criticism. His excellence does not consist in the predominance of one of his powers, but in the exquisite proportion and harmony of all. The richness, variety, and extent of his knowledge, are not so remarkable as his absolute mastery over it. He moves about in the loftiest sphere of contemplation, as though he were "native and endued to its element." He uses the finest classical allusions, the noblest images, and the most exquisite words, as though they were those which came first to his mind, and which formed his natural dialect. There is not the least appearance of straining after greatness in his most magnificent excursions; but he risest to the loftiest heights with a childlike ease. His style is one of the clearest and simplest—the least encumbered with its own beauty—of any which ever has been written. It is bright and lucid as a mirror, and its most highly-wrought and sparkling embellishments are like ornaments of crystal, which, even in their brilliant inequalities of surface, give back to the eye little pieces of the true imagery set before them.

The works of this great preacher are, in the highest sense of the term, imaginative, as distinguished not only from the didactic, but from the fanciful. He possesses "the vision and faculty divine," in as high a degree as any of our writers in prose. His noblest passages do but make truth visible in the form of beauty, and "clothe upon" abstract ideas, till they become palpable in exquisite shapes. The dullest writer would not convey the same meaning in so few words, as he has done in the most sublime of his illustrations. Imagination, when like his, of the purest water, is so far from being improperly employed on divine subjects, that it only finds its real objects in the true and the eternal. This power it is which disdains the scattered elements of beauty, as they appear distinctly in an imperfect world, and strives by accumulation, and by rejecting the alloy cast on all things, to embody to the mind that ideal beauty which shall be realized hereafter. This, by shedding a consecrating light on

* We use this epithet merely as that which will most distinctly characterize the extensive class to which it is applied, well aware that there are shades of difference among them, and that many of them would decline to call themselves after any name but that of Christ.

all it touches, and "bringing them into one," anticipates the future harmony of creation. This already sees the "soul of goodness in things evil," which shall one day change the evil into its likeness. This already begins the triumph over the separating powers of death and time, and renders their victory doubtful, by making us feel the immortality of the affections. Such is the faculty which is employed by Mr. Hall to its noblest uses. There is no rhetorical flourish—no mere pomp of words—in his most eloquent discourses. With vast excursive power, indeed, he can range through all the glories of the Pagan world, and, seizing those traits of beauty which they derived from primeval revelation, restore them to the system of truth. But he is ever best when he is intensest—when he unveils the mighty foundations of the rock of ages—or makes the hearts of his hearers vibrate with a strange joy, which they will recognize in more exalted stages of their being.

Mr. Hall has unfortunately committed but few of his discourses to the press. His sermon on the tendencies of Modern Infidelity is one of the noblest specimens of his genius. Nothing can be more fearfully sublime than the picture which he gives of the desolate state to which Atheism would reduce the world; or more beautiful and triumphant than his vindication of the social affections. His sermon on the Death of the Princess Charlotte contains a philosophical and eloquent development of the causes which make the sorrows of those who are encircled by the brightest appearances of happiness peculiarly affecting; and gives an exquisite picture of the gentle victim adorned with sacrificial glories. His Discourses on War—on the Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister—and on the Work of the Holy Spirit, are of great and various excellence. But as our limits will allow only a single extract, we prefer giving the close of a sermon preached in the prospect of the invasion of England by Napoleon, in which he blends the finest remembrance of the antique world, the dearest associations of British patriotism, and the pure spirit of the gospel, in a strain as noble as could be poured out by Tyrtæus.

[The passages quoted are from the sermon on "the Sentiments proper to the Present Crisis."]

There is nothing very remarkable in Mr. Hall's manner of delivering his sermons. His simplicity, yet solemnity of deportment, engage the attention, but do not promise any of his most rapturous effusions. His voice is feeble, but

distinct; and as he proceeds, trembles beneath his images, and conveys the idea that the spring of sublimity and beauty in his mind is exhaustless, and would pour forth a more copious stream if it had a wider channel than can be supplied by the bodily organs. The plainest and least inspired of his discourses are not without delicate gleams of imagery, and felicitous turns of expression. He expatiates on the prophecies with a kindred spirit, and affords awful glimpses into the valley of vision. He often seems to conduct his hearers to the top of the "Delectable Mountains," whence they can see from afar the glorious gates of the eternal city. He seems at home among the marvellous revelations of St. John; and while he expatiates on them, leads his hearers breathless through ever-varying scenes of mystery, far more glorious and surprising than the wildest of oriental fables. He stops when they most desire that he should proceed, when he has just disclosed the dawnings of the inmost glory to their enraptured minds—and leaves them full of imaginations of "things not made with hands"—of joys too ravishing for smiles—and of impulses which wing their hearts "along the line of limitless desires."

Sketches of Mr. Hall's Powers as a Writer.

1. *From the Quarterly Review,* No. 95.

Whatever may be the value of the rough notes, when Hall not merely hews out materials, but brings them too to an excellent work, excellent indeed it is; and his Sermons on Modern Infidelity, on War, on the Death of the Princess Charlotte, on the Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister, and not least, the discourse entitled "Sentiments proper to the present Crisis," are all wonderful compositions; wonderful both for the scale and the variety of the powers they display: a head so metaphysical, seeming to have little in common with an imagination so glowing; declamation so impassioned, with wisdom so practical; touches of pathos so tender, with such caustic irony, such bold invective, such spirit-stirring encouragements to heroic deeds; and all conveyed in language worthy to be the vehicle of such diverse thoughts, precise or luxuriant, stern or playful—that most rare, but most eloquent of all kinds of speech, the masculine mother tongue of an able

man, which education has chastened but not killed; constructed after no model of which we are aware; more massive than Addison, more easy and unconstrained than Johnson, more sober than Burke: such are the features of Hall's deliberate compositions, and such is our most willing testimony to their worth.

---

2. *From the Edinburgh Weekly Journal.*

Hall has long been ranked with the highest of our classics; and few, we believe, will hazard an attack upon his fame. In depth, vigour, and comprehensiveness of mind; in intimate acquaintance with the springs of action, and sagacious detection of the sources of our errors; in that logical clearness which could see the strong points of a question, and gain the exact conclusion at which it was his wish to arrive; in admirable disposition of the materials he had gathered; in an imagination which threw life into the abstractions of the understanding, and which, how active soever, was yet the servant of the intellect; in sympathy with his fellow-men, and zeal for their best interests; in love of the admirable, in scorn of the base; in steady adherence to what he deemed the right; in that loftiness of thought which seemed only in its element when it had reached the height in which common minds grow dizzy; in affluence of language, skill in its application, and capacity of bringing out as well its strength as its harmony; in every gift and accomplishment essential to a finished man,—we know not where to look for one his superior. Neither ought we to forget the fine adjustment of his faculties, and the classical repose that was its natural result.

NOTE D.—[See page 156.]

AN EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM DR. PRICHARD.

THE following extract of a letter from Dr. Prichard to Dr. Frederick Thackeray, of Cambridge, describing con-

cisely the results of the *post mortem* examination, unfolds the cause of Mr. Hall's acute suffering for so many years.

"We found the heart diseased in substance, and the muscular structure soft, and looking like macerated cellular membrane; the left ventricle was judged to be one-third larger than usual. The whole of the aorta was diseased; the internal membrane, in parts where it had not been in contact with blood, of a bright scarlet colour, which increased in deepness, and in the abdominal part of the artery was of a red purple hue. It contained in several places patches of bony matter, about the size of a sixpence. This was the case particularly about the origin of the arteria innominata. The lungs were healthy. The kidney on the right side was *entirely filled* by a large, rough, pointed calculus. There was also an exostosis on the body of the fourth dorsal vertebra, about the third of an inch in height, and prominent. This was too high to be the cause of the long-continued pain, which must have arisen from the renal calculus.

"The gall bladder was quite full of calculi, though he had never experienced any symptoms referring to the liver or biliary secretion.

"Probably no man ever went through more physical suffering than Mr. Hall: he was a fine example of the triumph of the higher powers of mind, exalted by religion, over the infirmities of the body. His loss will long be felt in this place, not only by persons of his own communion, but by all that have any esteem for what is truly great and good."

NOTE E.—[See page 156.]

Sketches of Mr. Hall's Character, especially as manifested in Private Life.*

Mr. Hall seemed to me† very remarkable for being always in earnest. He was a perfect contrast to Socrates,

* The great accordance in some striking particulars of these independent sketches of Mr. Hall, may seem to give them, in those respects, almost the air of tautology. But I venture to retain the whole, to show in how many essential points every competent judge formed necessarily the same estimate.

† The late Rev. William Anderson, Classical Tutor at the Baptist Education Society.

who, as you will recollect, was called the ironist, from his constant assumption of a character that did not belong to him. Mr. Hall did not practise the Socratic irony; he never said one thing and meant another. He was earnest even in his wit and humour. It was never his design to impose on any person, and he was entirely free from suspicion. He was artless as a child. A sort of infantine simplicity was conspicuous in many parts of his conduct. With his extraordinary capacity, and a propension for abstract and refined thinking, it was curious and remarkable to observe the interest that he took in the present object. He threw himself entirely into whatever might be the topic of conversation, and seemed altogether engrossed with what pressed on the sense and solicited immediate attention. It was perhaps owing to this interest in the present object, together with an undecaying vivacity of feeling, that he appeared to enjoy with the keenest relish whatever tended to innocent pleasure. Gratifications that usually give delight only in the earlier periods of life he enjoyed to the very last, as if he had not advanced beyond boyhood.

His powers of conversation were very extraordinary, and discovered quite as great abilities as appeared in his preaching or writings. He seemed equally capable of talking clearly, forcibly, copiously, beautifully, on every subject, however common it might be, or however abstruse and remote from the course of general thought and conversation. He avoided, rather than invited, discourse on those subjects that might have been supposed to be most congenial with the cast and habit of his mind, and the current of his studies and speculations. He never *usurped* conversation, nor showed any disposition to give it any particular direction. He laid hold of casual topics of every kind, apparently to beguile the time, rather than as the occasions of imparting his knowledge, diffusing his wisdom, or turning them to any serious or practical purpose.

It was impossible to be often with Mr. Hall, and not be struck with the degree of nature that prevailed in all his words and actions, and in the whole of his bearing. Incidents, parts of conversations, that when separated from the circumstances in which they took place have an air of eccentricity and affectation, seemed perfectly natural as they occurred. All easily and spontaneously arose from the structure and usual operation of his mind, and the surrounding circumstances. There was no aim on his part to be singular, no effort to excite surprise, or catch admiration.

A very prominent quality of his mind seemed to be benevolence. He sympathized most deeply with all forms of distress, and endeavoured to afford relief, by suitable suggestions, by the exertions of his talents, and by pecuniary aid, to the full extent of his means. It was easy to discern in him a great concern and anxiety to render those that were about him as comfortable as possible, and a visible delight in the pleasure of his friends. Akin to his great benevolence was an unusual sensibility to kindness. Little services, offices of respect, and affection, small endeavours to promote his comfort, that would generally be considered as matters of course, even from those whose relation to him made the action a duty, would diffuse a gleam of benignity and satisfaction, and draw forth lively expressions of gratitude.

In him the reasoning faculty beamed forth with transcendent strength and grandeur.* He was one of those astonishing intellects which are said to "to grasp a system by intuition," and which scarcely commence their researches, before they fetch into view, and arrange exactly, those deeply embosomed treasures of the intellectual mine, for the discovery and display of which most men, even of cultivated talent, must have engaged in a laborious process. When roused in argument, he shone as a metaphysician of the profoundest class; and proved that he was conversant with the philosophical writers of the ancient and of the modern schools—of the worst schools which have dishonoured Germany, and of the best which have shed a lustre on Great Britain. His acumen quickly detected logical flaws in a fellow disputant. His extensive knowledge, his sound judgement, his finished taste, his luxuriant wit, and his noble vehemence, enabled him to encircle every topic which he touched with felicitous illustrations.

Great must be the number of those, especially in public life, who are thankfully conscious of being in no slight measure indebted, under God, to their intercourse with him, for

* Funeral Sermon preached at Broadmead, March 6th, 1831, by the late Rev. Joseph Hughes, A.M. This excellent man was a pupil of Mr. Hall's at Bristol, and afterwards succeeded him as classical tutor there. I may now add, what a deference to Mr. Hughes's own feelings has prevented me from saying earlier, that ages to come will "rise and call him blessed," as the honoured *inventor* of that most admirable and useful institution, "*The British and Foreign Bible Society.*"

views, principles, and impressions, and an increased facility of displaying them all, by which they have been themselves invigorated and improved, and have also been qualified, in their turn, to bestow a portion of the same benefit on others.

Perhaps the character of Mr. Hall's mind* cannot be better described in a single word than by saying that it is perfectly balanced, and combines all the various powers in their highest perfection. If he possessed any one faculty in the same exuberance in which he possesses them all, and in respect to the others were not in the least distinguished, it would be enough to render him an extraordinary man. If he reasons, it is always with strict philosophical accuracy; with a keen, searching glance into the very mysteries of his subject, leaving the reader or hearer often at a loss whether most to admire the light, or the strength, or the depth of his argument; and generally leaving his antagonist to the alternative of quiet submission, or preparing for a still more mortifying defeat. If he comes into the regions of taste or imagination, here he is also equally at home. With the same apparent ease that his mind can frame a powerful argument, it will pour forth images of exquisite beauty and tenderness, as well as of overwhelming majesty and strength. In short, there is no part of the intellectual world in which he does not seem to breathe freely, as if it were his peculiar element. He is at home as far below the surface of things, as far down in the depths of metaphysical abstraction, as perhaps any mind ever penetrates. He is at home amidst the common-sense realities of life, judging of men and things with as much accuracy, as if the whole business of his life had been to watch and analyze the operations of the human heart. He is at home in the field of fancy, in worlds of his own creation; and he can find in the mountain and in the valley, in the ocean and the sky, in the storm and the lightning, in every thing in the kingdom of nature and providence, a field where his imagination may expatiate with unlimited power. His acquisitions correspond, in a good degree, to his original endowments. It were not to be ex-

* From the Rev. Dr. Sprague, of Albany, New York, author of a most interesting and instructive volume on "Revivals of Religion" in America. This gentleman, when in England in 1828, spent some time in Bristol. The account from which I select the above passage was written before Mr. Hall's death.

pected, indeed, it were not possible, that he could have gone extensively into every department of science and learning, in which his great and versatile mind would have enabled him to become pre-eminent; we suppose his favourite studies to have been the science of morals and theology, though he has shown himself deeply versed in political economy, and the various branches of polite literature. His knowledge of the ancient and modern classics is extensive and exact; and, if we mistake not, they make part of his every-day reading, even at this advanced period of life.

We remember to have been equally delighted and astonished at hearing him converse for an hour upon the philosophy of language, in a style which discovered a degree of reflection and research, from which one might have supposed that it was not only a favourite topic, but that he had made it the study of his life.

It were naturally to be expected, an intellect of such uncommon strength should be associated with a corresponding strength of feeling. This is true, in respect to Mr. Hall; and it is no doubt to the power of his feelings that the world is indebted for some of the most brilliant and useful of his efforts. A man of dull temperament, let his intellect be what it might, could never produce those fine strains of soul-stirring eloquence, in which it is the privilege of Mr. Hall to pour out even his common thoughts. But with all the strength of his feelings, his heart is full of kindness and affection. In all his intercourse he is noble and generous. His attachments are strong and enduring. He is open and honest in respect to every thing and every body. As no one can approach him without a deep feeling of respect, so no one can be admitted to the hospitality of his fire-side, and the privilege of his friendship, without finding that the sentiment of respect is fast ripening into that of cordial and affectionate attachment.

In private conversation Mr. Hall is the admiration and delight of every circle in which he mingles. He converses a great deal, partly because when his mind is excited it is not easy for him to be silent, and partly because there is so much in his conversation to interest and edify, that almost every one who is in his company regards it as a privilege to listen rather than talk, and acts accordingly. We have been struck with the fact, that, let the conversation turn upon whatever subject it may, even though it be a subject on which he might be expected to be least at home, he is equally

ready, equally eloquent. He possesses, beyond any man we have known, the faculty of bringing facts and principles which are stored up in his mind, instantly to bear upon any given subject; throwing around it at once, to the mind of the hearer, the clear strong light in which it appears to his own. This must be owing, partly to the original power which he possesses, of discerning almost intuitively even the most remote relations of things to each other, and partly to the perfect order with which his intellectual acquisitions are arranged. In the midst of an involved discussion, he will bring to his aid insulated facts from the various departments of knowledge, without the least hesitation or effort, just as we have known some men who had a remarkable attachment to order, able to enter their library, and lay their hand on any book at pleasure in the dark. But, notwithstanding he converses so much, there is not the semblance of an obtrusive or ostentatious manner; nothing that seems to say that he is thinking of his own superiority; on the contrary, he seems to forget, and sometimes makes those around him forget, the greatness of the man, in the greatness which he throws around his subject. He has a strong passion for sarcasm, which often comes out in his conversation, and sometimes with prodigious effect. Yet he is by no means severe in the common estimate which he forms of character; so far from it, that he treats characters for the most part with unusual lenity, and sometimes seems delighted with exhibitions of intellect from others, which would have appeared to every one else far below the most common-place efforts of his own mind.

Perhaps, however, after all that has been said, the most interesting point of view in which Mr. Hall's character can be contemplated, is his entire freedom from a spirit of sectarianism, and his efforts to unite evangelical Christians of various denominations in the bonds of holy affection, and in their exertions to advance a common cause. He is a Baptist; but he dissents from most of his brethren on the subject of strict communion. Indeed, he is the pastor both of a Baptist and Independent church, worshipping in the same congregation; and he administers the Lord's Supper to them separately, because many of the Baptists still adhere to close communion. But he does not hesitate to avow that he has more fellowship of feeling for an Independent or a Presbyterian, than he has for a close-communion Baptist. His whole intercourse and conduct are in full accordance with his liberal principles. During his residence at Leicester, he

formed an intimacy with the Rev. Thomas Robinson, a distinguished clergyman of the established church. After the death of Mr. Robinson, Mr. Hall pronounced an eulogium upon him, which is in his best style of eloquence, and which demonstrates that he is as capable of appreciating intellectual and moral excellence beyond, as within the limits of his own sect. Indeed, the qualities of his heart, no less than those of his understanding, utterly forbid that he should be *exclusive* either in his friendship or his intercourse; and the fact is, as might be expected, that the most enlightened and excellent in the various Christian denominations are among his friends.

In his countenance there is something which we do not expect ever to see faithfully copied; which, indeed, we do not believe *can* be copied in all its perfection. In certain states of feeling, his eye exhibits not merely the fire, but, if the expression may be allowed, the very lightning of genius. You could not meet him as a stranger in the market-place, without perceiving at a glance that he is no common man; and if he should turn his eye upon you when his mind is coming forth in the majesty and storm of burning thought, you would scarcely find it difficult to believe that he was intended to link man to some higher order of beings. In his very gait there is a majesty, which tells of the greatness of his intellect.

In his converse, as well as in his ministrations, no one could avoid being struck by a certain naturalness and simplicity, peculiar to himself, and rendered the more remarkable and engaging by its union with such consummate intelligence and eloquence.* His companion or hearer was alike surprised or charmed by the harmonious contrast of excellencies, so dissimilar, yet in him so perfectly combined.

In all that he uttered, whether in social or sacred discourse, there was a vivid freshness and raciness of thought and expression that marked it as the growth of his own mind, and gave an interest to his familiar remarks, as well as to the more elaborate productions of his mighty genius. Possessed of art and refinement in the highest degree, he had the rare and strange felicity of retaining unimpaired the charm of native beauty.

Among the predominant qualities of his nature, one of the most obvious was his openness, his ingenuous unreserve, his

* Communicated by the Rev. Thomas Grinfield, A. M., of Clifton.

social communicativeness. Conversation was not less his congenial element, than contemplation. He evidently delighted to disclose and impart the accumulated stores of his mind: while he seemed to luxuriate in that unequalled fluency of graceful or energetic language with which he was gifted. The warmth of his affections was proportioned to the strength of his intellect. His own mental opulence did not make him independent on the converse and friendship of those who were poor in comparison with himself. He felt, in the language of Cicero, and as he has elegantly portrayed his feelings in the sermon on the death of Dr. Ryland, that "Caritate et benevolentia sublata, omnis est è vita sublata jucunditas."

The benevolence of his capacious heart greatly contributed at once to inspire and increase his love of society and conversation; while, in the social circle, and in the solemn assembly, he appeared as a distinguished representative, a most expressive organ of our nature, in all its more familiar sentiments, or in all its more sublime conceptions and aspirations. Hence he was regarded by the multitudes who sought his public or his private presence, as a kind of universal property, whom all parties had a right to enjoy, and none to monopolize; before him all forgot their denominations, as he appeared to forget his own in the comprehensive idea of the Church of Christ.

In recollecting the moral features of his character, it is impossible to forget the consummate truth and sincerity, which left its unequivocal stamp on all he said, of which a suspicion never occurred to any one, and which gave to his discourses a solidity and an impressiveness, which, otherwise, their argument and eloquence could never have commanded. Never has there been a stronger, a more universal confidence in the sacred orator, as one whose eloquence was kindled in his own heart; never were the testimony of faith, and the rapture of hope, exhibited in a more manifestly genuine, unaffected, and consequently in a more convincing form. His was truly the "generoso incoctum pectus Honesto." This added to his ministry a singular and inestimable charm. Hence, more than any other advocate of evangelical principles, he was revered, even by the irreligious. His peculiar ascendancy over such was not acquired by any degree of compromise in his exhibition of spiritual religion; it was the involuntary result of their conviction that his earnestness was as perfect as his eloquence. Never can there have been a preacher more strikingly characterized

by a dignified simplicity, a majesty unalloyed by pomp; never was there a finer combination of the utmost manliness and grandeur with the utmost delicacy and pathos. No wonder that such qualities, combined in such perfection, should have produced so strong and so extensive an enchantment.

It must be acknowledged that the moral graces of his character derived a peculiar and accidental advantage from the intellectual power and splendour with which they were united; a remark particularly applicable to that child-like simplicity by which he was distinguished, and to that delicate and refined modesty, which was the natural indication of an interior and inwrought humility. "Be clothed with Humility," was the subject of his last lecture preparatory to the communion, the last entire address which I heard from his lips; (Jan. 1831) and as I returned in company with some other members of the Church of England, who privileged themselves with hearing him on these monthly opportunities, we were all impressed by the force which his pathetic exhortation acquired from his own conspicuous example of the grace he had recommended. His humility gave a charm to his character and to his preaching, which all his more brilliant qualities, without it, could not have supplied; while it served as a dark back-ground, from which their brilliant contrast rose the more impressive and sublime.

In thus slightly glancing at some of the more retired graces with which he was adorned, I cannot dismiss the hasty and unfinished sketch without referring to that sweet sunshine of serenity, cheerfulness, and bland good nature, which, unobscured by so much acute or wearing pain, habitually beamed in his noble aspect, and diffused its genial influence alike over his converse and his preaching. A friend, subject to constitutional depression of spirits, assured me that, on several occasions, he has found his sadness soothed by the balm of a visit or a sermon, for which he had resorted to Mr. Hall. Nothing morose, nothing gloomy, either in his natural temper, or in his religious views, impaired the fascination of his presence, or the benefit of his ministry.

The remembrance of such a man, especially as it is now embalmed and sanctified by death, (and his death was altogether in harmony with his character,) cannot leave any other than a beneficial influence, ennobling and elevating to the mind and heart. The name of "Robert Hall" is rich in sacred, as well as splendid, associations; a memento

of consecrated intellect and energy; an inspiring watchword for the cultivation of Christian graces and of heavenly affections; an antidote to all that is unworthy in principle or practice; an attraction to whatever, in the intellectual or moral system, bears the stamp of unaffected excellence; whatever qualifies for the fruition of spiritual and eternal blessings; whatever is allied to the love of CHRIST AND GOD.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

MR. HALL'S CHARACTER AS A PREACHER.

BY JOHN FOSTER.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

MR. HALL'S CHARACTER AS A PREACHER.

The biographical and literary illustrations of Mr. Hall's character and performances, expected from the highly qualified Editor of his works, and from the eminent person who has engaged for a part of that tribute to his memory,* may render any formal attempt in addition liable to be regarded as both superfluous and intrusive; the public, besides, have been extensively and very long in possession of their own means of forming that judgement which has pronounced him the first preacher of the age: and again, so soon after the removal of such a man, while the sentiments of friendship and admiration are finding their natural expression in the language of unrestrained eulogy, it is hardly permitted to assume a judicial impartiality. From these considerations it has been with very great reluctance that I have consented, in compliance with the wishes of some of Mr. Hall's friends, to attempt a short description of what he was in the special capacity of a preacher; a subject which must

* These observations were written and transmitted to the publishers, a considerable time before the lamented and unexpected decease of Sir James Mackintosh. It is, perhaps worth mentioning, that the writer had felt it a propriety to abstain from any attempt at a comparison between Mr. Hall and the most celebrated English and French preachers, or ancient and modern orators of other classes; confidently expecting (besides being conscious of deficient qualifications,) that this would be a favourite exercise of Sir James's consummate critical judgement.

indeed be of chief account in *any* memorial of him; but may also admit of being taken in some degree separately from the general view of his life, character, and writings.

For more reasons than that it must be one cause, added to others, of an imperfect competence to describe him in that capacity, I have to regret the disadvantage of not having been more than very occasionally, perhaps hardly ten times in all, a hearer of Mr. Hall till within the last few years of his life. It appears to be the opinion of all those attendants on his late ministrations, who had also been his hearers in former times, (and, from recollection of the few sermons which I heard many years since, my own impression would be the same,) that advancing age, together with the severe and almost continual pressure of pain, had produced a sensible effect on his preaching, perceptible in an abatement of the energy and splendour of his eloquence. He was less apt to be excited to that intense ardour of emotion and utterance which so often, animating to the extreme emphasis a train of sentiments impressive by their intrinsic force, had held dominion over every faculty of thought and feeling in a large assembly. It is not meant, however, that a considerable degree of this ancient fire did not frequently appear glowing and shining again. Within the course of a moderate number of sermons there would be one or more which brought back the preacher of the times long past, to the view of those who had heard him in those times.

I have reason to believe, that this representation of his diminished energy should be nearly limited to a very late period, the period when an increased, but reluctant, use of opiates became absolutely necessary, to enable him to endure the pain which he had suffered throughout his life, and when another obscure malady was gradually working towards a fatal termination. For, at a time not more than seven or eight years since, I heard in close succession several sermons delivered in so ardent an excitement of sentiment and manner as I could not conceive it possible for himself, or any other orator to have surpassed. Even so lately as within the last four

or five years of his life, the recurrence of something approaching to this was not so unfrequent as to cause his friends the painful feeling (sometimes experienced by the hearers of an excellent minister declining into old age) that he was no longer to be regarded as the preacher that he once had been.

There was some compensation for the abatement of this character of force and vehemence, supplied by a certain tone of kindness, a milder pathos, more sensibly expressive of benevolence towards his hearers, than the impetuous, the almost imperious energy, so often predominant when an undepressed vitality of the physical system was auxiliary to the utmost excitement of his mind.

There seems to be an agreement of opinion that a considerable decline of the power or the activity of his *imagination* was evident in the latter part of his life. The felicities of figure and allusion of all kinds, sometimes illustrative by close analogy, often gay and humorous, sometimes splendid, less abounded in his conversation. And in his public discourses there appeared to be a much rarer occurrence of those striking images in which a series of thoughts seemed to take fire in passing on, to end in a still more striking figure, with the effect of an explosion. So that, from persons who would occasionally go to hear him with much the same taste and notions as they would carry to a theatrical or mere oratorical exhibition, and caring little about religious truth and instruction, there might be heard complaints of disappointment, expressed in terms of more than hinted depreciation. They had hardly any other idea of eloquence, even that of the pulpit, than that it must be *brilliant;* and they certainly might happen to hear, at the late period in question, several of his sermons which had not more than a very moderate share of this attraction. But even such persons, if disposed to attend his preaching regularly for a few weeks, might have been sure to hear some sermons in which the solidity of thought was finely inspirited with the sparkling quality they were requiring.

But whatever reduction his imagination may have suf-

fered from age, and the oppression of disease and pain, it is on all hands admitted that there was no decline in what he valued far more in both himself and others, and what all, except very young or defectively cultivated persons, and inferior poets, must regard as the highest of mental endowments—the intellectual power. His wonderful ability for comprehending and reasoning; his quickness of apprehension, his faculty for analyzing a subject to its elements, for seizing on the essential points, for going back to principles and forward to consequences, and for bringing out into an intelligible and sometimes very obvious form, what appeared obscure or perplexed, remained unaltered to the last. This noble intellect, thus seen with a diminished lustre of imagination, suggested the idea of a lofty eminence raising its form and summit clear and bare toward the sky, losing nothing of its imposing aspect by absence of the wreaths of tinctured clouds which may have invested it at another season.

It is to be observed, that imagination had always been a subordinate faculty in his mental constitution. It was never of that prolific power which threw so vast a profusion over the oratory of Jeremy Taylor or of Burke; or which could tempt him to revel, for the pure luxury of the indulgence, as they appear to have sometimes done, in the exuberance of imaginative genius.

As a preacher, none of those contemporaries who have not seen him in the pulpit, or of his readers in another age, will be able to conceive an adequate idea of Mr. Hall. His personal appearance was in striking conformity to the structure and temper of his mind. A large-built, robust figure, was in perfect keeping with a countenance formed as if on purpose for the most declared manifestation of internal power, a power impregnable in its own strength, as in a fortress, and constantly, without an effort, in a state for action.* That countenance was

* The portrait to accompany the Works, highly elaborated, and true to the general form and lineaments, fails to give exactly that stern, intense, and somewhat formidable *expression*, which the painter, Mr. Branwhite, was very successful in seizing, in spite of circumstances the most unfavourable for obtaining a likeness. Mr. Hall had an insuperable aversion to sit for his portrait.

usually of a cool, unmoved mien, at the beginning of the public service; and sometimes, when he was not greatly excited by his subject, or was repressed by pain, would not acquire a great degree of temporary expression during the whole discourse. At other times it would kindle into an ardent aspect as he went on, and toward the conclusion become lighted up almost into a glare. But, for myself, I doubt whether I was not quite as much arrested by his appearance in the interval while a short part of the service, performed without his assistance, immediately before the sermon, allowed him to sit in silence. With his eyes closed, his features as still as in death, and his head sinking down almost on his chest, he presented an image of entire abstraction. For a moment, perhaps, he would seem to wake to a perception of the scene before him, but instantly relapse into the same state. It was interesting to imagine the strong internal agency, which it was certain was then employed on the yet unknown subject about to be unfolded to the auditory.

His manner of public prayer, considered as an exercise of thought, was not exactly what would have been expected from a mind constituted like his. A manner so different in that exercise from its operation in all other employments could hardly have been unintentional: but on what principle it was preferred cannot be known or conjectured. It is to the *intellectual* consistence and order of his thoughts in public prayer that I am adverting, in uncertainty how far the opinion of others may have been the same; as to the *devotional* spirit, there could be but one impression. There was the greatest seriousness and simplicity, the plainest character of genuine piety, humble and prostrate before the Almighty. Both solemnity and good taste forbade indulgence in any thing showy or elaborately ingenious in such an employment. But there might have been, without an approach to any such impropriety, and as it always appeared to me, with great advantage, what I may venture to call a more *thinking* performance of the exercise; a series of ideas more reflectively conceived, and more connected and

classed in their order. Many of the conceptions were not, individually, presented in that specific expression which conveys one certain thing to the apprehension; nor were there, generally speaking, those *trains* of petitionary thought, which would strongly fix, and for a while detain, the attention on each distinctly, in the succession of the subjects of devotional interest.

No one, I may presume, will be so mistaken as to imagine, that *pieces of discussion,* formal developements of doctrine, nice casuistical distinctions, like sections of a theological essay, are meant in pleading that it must be of great advantage for engaging attention, exciting interest, and inducing reflection, that instead of a rapidly discursive succession of ideas, the leader of the devotions should often dwell awhile on one and another important topic, and with a number of accumulated sentiments specifically appropriate to each; in order that its importance, thus exposed and aggravated, may constrain the auditory to reflect how deeply they are concerned in that one subject of petition. Any one pernicious thing deprecated—a spiritual evil, a vice of the heart or life, an easily besetting temptation, a perilous delusion into which men are liable to fall, or a temporal calamity,—and so, on the other hand, any one of the good gifts implored,—might thus be exposed in magnified and palpable importance before the minds of the people.

Will it be objected that this would tend to a practice not consistent either with the comprehensiveness of religion, or with the generality of scope requisite to adapt the prayer to the aggregate interests of a very mixed assemblage; that it would be to confine the attention to a few selected particulars of religion, losing the view of its wide compass; and to reduce the prayer, which should be for all the people collectively regarded, to a set of adaptations to certain supposed individual cases, or small classes, singled out in the congregation, to the exclusion, in effect, of the general body? I may answer that, in perfect safety from shrinking into such specialty and exclusiveness, the great element of religion may be resolved into particular subjects and adaptations in public

prayer. Particular parts of divine truth and christian morals may come in view as suggesting matter of distinct and somewhat prolonged petition, conceived in terms that shall constantly and closely recognise the condition of the people. A man well exercised in religion, and well acquainted with the states and characters of men, might recount to himself a greater number of such topics than the longest book in the Bible comprises chapters; and would see that each of them might beneficially be somewhat amplified by thoughts naturally arising upon it; that one of them would be peculiarly appropriate to one portion of the assembly, another of them adapted to several conditions, and some of them commensurate with the interests of all. In one prayer of moderate length he might comprehend a number of these distinguishable topics, thus severally kept in view for a few moments; and, varying them from time to time, he might bring the concerns which are the business of prayer, in *parts*, and with special effects, before the minds of the people, instead of giving the course of his thoughts every time to the guidance of entirely accidental and miscellaneous suggestion. I might ask, why should *sermons* be constructed to fix the attention of a mixed congregation on distinct parts of religion, instead of being, each in succession, vaguely discursive over the whole field? I would not say that the two exercises are under exactly the same law; but still, is there a propriety, that in a discourse for religious instruction some selected topics should stand forth in marked designation, to work one certain effect on the understanding or the feelings, and *no* propriety that any corresponding principle should be observed in those prayers which may be supposed to request, and with much more than a passing momentary interest, such things as that instruction would indicate as most important to be obtained?

But besides all this, there is no hazard in affirming, that prayers which do not detain the thoughts on any certain things in particular, take very slight hold of the auditors. Things noted so transiently do not admit of a deliberate attention, and seem as if they did not claim

it; the assembly are not made conscious how much they want what is petitioned for; and at the close would be at a loss to recollect any one part as having awaked a strong consciousness that *that* is what they have *themselves* in a special manner to pray for when alone.

Such observations are, under small limitation, applicable to Mr. Hall's public prayer. The succession of sentences appeared almost casual, or in a connexion too slight to hold the hearer's mind distinctly, for a time, to a certain object. A very large proportion of the series consisted of texts of Scripture; and, as many of these were figurative, often requiring, in order to apprehend their plain sense, an act of thought for which there was not time, the mind was led on with a very defective conception of the exact import of much of the phraseology. He did not avail himself of the portion of Scripture he had just read, as a guiding suggestion of subjects for the prayer; and very seldom made it bear any particular relation to what was to follow as the subject of the discourse.

One could wish that, with the exception of very peculiar cases, *personalities*, when they must be introduced, should be as brief as possible in public prayer; especially such as point to individuals who are present, and whose own feelings, one should think, would earnestly deprecate their being made conspicuous objects of the prolonged attention of the congregation. Mr. Hall's consideration for individuals standing officially, or brought incidentally, in association with an assembly, often led him to a length and particularity in personal references, which one could not help regretting, as an encroachment on the time and more proper concerns of the exercise, and as a sanction lent by an example of such high authority to a practice which leads the thoughts quite away from the interests in common; tempting the auditors into an impertinence of imagination about the persons so placed in exhibition, their characters, domestic circumstances, and so forth; with possibly a silent criticism, not much in harmony with devotion, on some flaw of consistency between the terms which the speaker is now em-

ploying, and those which he may be heard, or may have been heard, to use in other times and places respecting the same individuals. In the laudatory tone and epithets into which he inevitably glides (for he never adverts to any *faults* of the persons thus prominently held in view, with prayer for their correction), it is hardly possible for him, while the matter is kept long under operation, to avoid its changing colour, from that of reverence towards God, into that of compliment to a fellow-mortal and fellow-sinner.

If there was a defect of concentration, an indeterminateness in the direction of thought, in Mr. Hall's public prayers, the reverse was conspicuous in his preaching. He was inferior to no preacher of any period in the capital excellence of having a definite purpose, a distinct assignable subject, in each sermon. Sometimes, indeed, as when intruders had robbed him of all his time for study, or when his spirits had been consumed by a prolonged excess of pain, he was reduced to take the license of discoursing with less definite scope, on the common subjects of religion. But he was never pleased with any scheme of a sermon in which he could not, at the outset, say exactly what it was he meant to do. He told his friends that he always felt "he could do nothing with" a text or subject till it resolved and shaped itself into a topic of which he could see the form and outline, and which he could take out both from the extensive system of religious truth, and, substantially, from its connexion with the more immediately related parts of that system; at the same time not failing to indicate that connexion, by a few brief clear remarks to show the consistency and mutual corroboration of the portions thus taken apart for separate discussion. This method insured to him and his hearers the advantage of an ample variety. Some of them remember instances in which he preached, with but a short interval, two sermons on what would have appeared, to common apprehension, but *one* subject, a very limited section of doctrine, or duty; yet the sermons went on quite different tracks of thought, presenting separate views of the subject, related to each other only by

a general consistency. His survey of the extended field of religion was in the manner of a topographer, who fixes for a while on one separate district, and then on another, finding in each, though it were of very confined dimensions, many curious matters of research, and many interesting objects; while yet he shall possess the wide information which keeps the country at large so comprehensively within his view, that he can notice and illustrate, as he proceeds, all the characters of the relation of the parts to one another and to the whole.

The preacher uniformly began his sermons in a low voice, and with sentences of the utmost plainness both of thought and language. It was not, I believe, in observance of any precept of the rhetoricians, or with any conscious intention, that he did so; it was simply the manner in which his mind naturally set in for the consideration of an important subject. This perfect plainness of the introduction, quietly delivered in a voice deficient in tone and force, and difficult to be heard at first by a large part of the congregation, occasioned surprise and disappointment sometimes to strangers drawn by curiosity to hear "the celebrated orator," in the expectation, perhaps, of his going off in powerful sallies, flourishes, and fulminations. "Can this be he?" has been the question whispered between some two such expectants, seated together. A short comment on the facts in Scripture history found in connexion with the text, or which had been the occasion of the words; or on circumstances in the condition of the primitive church; or on some ancient or modern error relating to the subject to be proposed; would give, within the space of five or ten minutes, the condensed and perspicuous result of much reading and study. Sometimes he would go immediately to his subject, after a very few introductory sentences. And the attentive hearer was certain to apprehend what that subject was. It was stated precisely, yet in so simple a manner as to preclude all appearance of elaborate definition.

The distribution was always perfectly inartificial, cast in an order of the least formality of division that could mark an intelligible succession of parts, very seldom ex-

ceeding the number of three or four; which set forth the elements of the subject in the merest natural form, if I may express it so, of their subsistence. Generally, each of these parts was illustrated in two or three particulars, noted as first, second, and perhaps third. He never attempted, never thought of, those schemes of arrangement in which parts are ingeniously placed in antithesis, or in such other disposition as to reflect cross-lights on one another, producing surprise and curious expectation, with a passing glance of thought at the dexterity of the preacher who can work them in their contrasted positions to one ultimate effect. It is not denied that such ingenious and somewhat quaint devices of arrangement have had their advantage, in the hands of men who made them the vehicles of serious and important sentiment, really desirous not to amuse but to attract and instruct. They catch attention, make the progress and stages of the discourse more sensible by the transitions between points apparently so abruptly asunder, and leave more durable traces in the memory than, it was often complained, could be preserved by Mr. Hall's sermons. But such a mode was entirely foreign to the constitution and action of his mind. He never came on his subject by any thing like manœuvre; never approached it *sideways;* never sought to secure himself resources in particular parts, corners, and adjuncts, against the effects of a failure in the main substance; never threw out the force of a subject in off-sets; never expended it in dispersed varieties. He had it in one full single view before him, the parts lying in natural contiguity as a whole; and advanced straight forward in pursuance of a plain leading principle; looking to the right and the left just so far as to preserve the due breadth of the illustration.

This is meant as a description generally applicable to the earlier and middle portions of the discourse, which were often, as regarded in a purely intellectual view, much the most valuable.* It was highly interesting,

* There was a remission of strict connexion of thought towards the conclusion, where he threw himself loose into a strain of declamation, always earnest, and often fervid. This was of great effect in securing

even as a mere affair of mental operation, independently of the religious object, to accompany this part of his progress; from the announcement of his subject (sometimes in the form of a general proposition founded on the text, oftener in a more free exposition), onward through a series of statements, illustrations, and distinctions, till an important doctrine became unfolded to view, full in its explication, and strong in its evidence. In this progress he would take account of any objections which he deemed it of consequence to obviate, meeting them without evasion, with acuteness and exact knowledge, available to the point. Every mode and resource of argument was at his command; but he was singularly successful in that which is technically denominated *reductio ad absurdum*. Many a specious notion and cavil was convicted of being not only erroneous, but foolish.

He displayed, in a most eminent degree, the rare excellence of a perfect conception and expression of every thought, however rapid the succession. There were no half-formed ideas, no misty semblances of a meaning, no momentary lapses of intellect into an utterance at hazard, no sentences without a distinct object, and serving merely for the continuity of speaking; every sentiment had at once a palpable shape, and an appropriateness to the immediate purpose. If now and then, which was seldom, a word, or a part of a sentence, slightly failed to denote precisely the thing he intended, it was curious to observe how perfectly he was aware of it, and how he would instantly throw in an additional clause, which did signify it precisely. Another thing for curious observation was, that sometimes, in the middle of a sentence, or just as it came to an end, there would suddenly occur to him some required point of discrimination, some exception perhaps, or limitation, to the assertion he was in the act of mak-

a degree of favour with many, to whom so intellectual a preacher would not otherwise have been acceptable; it was this that reconciled persons of simple piety and little cultivated understanding. Many who might follow him with very imperfect apprehension and satisfaction through the preceding parts, could *reckon* on being warmly interested at the latter end. In that part his utterance acquired a remarkable change of intonation, expressive of his own excited feelings.

ing; or at another time, a circumstance of reinforcement extraneously suggested, a transient ray, as it were, from a foreign and distant object; and then he would, at the prompting of the moment, intimate the qualifying reference in a brief parenthesis in the sentence, or by a reverting glance at the end of it.—In these last lines of the description, I have in view the more closely intellectual parts of his public exercises, the parts employed in the ascertainment and elucidation of truth. There will be occasion, towards the close of these notices, to attribute some defect of discrimination and caution to other parts or qualities of his sermons.

It were superfluous to say that Mr. Hall's powerful reasoning faculty, and his love and habit of reasoning, went into his preaching; but I may be allowed to observe, that the argumentative tenour thence prevailing through it, was of a somewhat different modification from the reasoning process exhibited in the composition of some of the most distinguished sermon writers. To say that he had much, very much, of the essence and effect of reasoning without its forms, will perhaps be considered as unqualified praise. Certainly we have a good riddance in the obsoleteness of the cumbrous and barbarous technicalities of logic in use among schoolmen, and of which traces remain in the works of some of our old divines, especially of the polemic class. But, divested of every sort of technicality, a natural and easy logic (easy, I mean, for the hearers' or readers' apprehension) may pervade a discourse in such manner, that it shall have more of the consistence of a contexture than of an accumulation. The train of thinking may preserve a link of connexion by the dependence of the following thought on the foregoing; that succeeding thought not only being just in itself and pertinent to the matter in hand, but being so still more specially in virtue of resulting, by obvious deduction, or necessary continuation, from the preceding; thus at once giving and receiving force by the connexion. It is of great advantage for the strength of a discourse, when it is so conceived as to require the not unfrequent recurrence of the signs, "for," "because,"

"if—then," "consequently," "so that," and the other familiar logical marks of conjunction and dependence in the series of ideas.

This will not be mistaken to mean any thing like a long uninterrupted process, as in a mathematical demonstration, carried on in a rigorous strictness of method, and with a dependence of the validity of some one final result on the correctness of each and every movement in the long operation. No lengthened courses of deduction are required or admissible in popular instruction; the discourse must, at no distant intervals, come to pauses and changes, introducing matters of argument and illustration which are chosen by the preacher for their general pertinence and effectiveness to the subject, rather than by any strict logical rule of continuity; and he is not required to answer a captious question of a disciple of the schools whether this topic, and this again, be in the most exact line of sequence with the foregoing. It is sufficient that there be an obvious *general* relation, connecting the successive portions of the discourse; so that each in the succession shall take along with it the substantial effect of the preceding. But through the extent of each of these portions, the course of thinking might be conducted in a certain order of consecutive dependence, which should make the thoughts not merely to coincide, but to verify and authenticate one another while they coincide, in bearing on the proposed object. And such a mode of working them into evidence and application, would give them a closer grapple on the mind.

There will be testimony to this from the experience of readers conversant with the best examples; for instance, the sermons of South, which, glaringly censurable as many of them are on very grave accounts, are admirable for this linked succession, this passing to a further idea by *consequence* from the preceding, and not merely by that principle of relation between them, that they both tend to the same effect. Yet, at the same time, so far is he from exhibiting a cold dry argument, like Clarke in his sermons, that his ratiocination is abundantly charged with what may be called the matter of passion; often

indeed malicious and fierce, sometimes solemnly impressive ; at all events serving to show that strong argument may be worked in fire as well as in frost.* It has always appeared to me, that Mr. Hall's discourses would have had one more ingredient of excellence, if the rich and strong production of thought, while pressing, as it always did, with an united impulse toward the point in view, had been drawn out in a sequence of more express and palpable dependence and concatenation. The conjunction of the ideas would sometimes appear to be rather that of contiguity than of implication. The successive sentences would come like separate independent dictates of intellect, the absence of which would indeed have been a loss to the general force, but not a breach of connexion. It must be observed, however, that when special occasions required it, he would bring into exercise the most severe logic in the most explicit form. Many fine examples of this are found in his controversy on Terms of Communion. And such would, at times, occur in his sermons.

Every cultivated hearer must have been struck with admiration of the preacher's mastery of language, a refractory servant to many who have made no small efforts to command it. I know not whether he sometimes painfully felt its deficiency and untowardness for his purpose ; but it *seemed* to answer all his requirements, whether for cutting nice discriminations, or presenting abstractions in a tangible form, or investing grand subjects with splendour, or imparting a pathetic tone to expostulation, or inflaming the force of invective, or treating common topics without the insipidity of common-place diction. His language in the pulpit was hardly ever colloquial, but neither was it of an artificial cast. It was generally as little *bookish* as might consist with an uniformly sustained and serious style. Now and then there would be a scholastic term beyond the popular understanding, so

* Among others, I might name Stillingfleet's sermons, as exemplifying this manner of connexion in the series of ideas. If reference were made to ancient eloquence, Demosthenes would be cited as the transcendent example of this excellence.

familiar to himself, from his study of philosophers and old divines, as to be the first word occurring to him in his rapid delivery. Some conventional phrases which he was in the habit of using (for instance, "to usher in," "to give birth to," &c.), might better have been exchanged for plain unfigurative verbs. His language in preaching, as in conversation, was in one considerable point better than in his well-known and elaborately composed sermons, in being more natural and flexible. When he set in reluctantly upon that operose employment, his style was apt to assume a certain processional stateliness of march, a rhetorical rounding of periods, a too frequent inversion of the natural order of the sentence, with a morbid dread of degrading it to end in a particle or other small looking word; a structure in which I doubt whether the augmented appearance of strength and dignity be a compensation for the sacrifice of a natural, living, and variable freedom of composition. A remarkable difference will be perceived between the highly-wrought sermons long since published, and the short ones inserted in the fifth volume, which were written without a thought of the press; a difference to the advantage of the latter in the grace of simplicity.* Both in his conversation and his public speaking, there was often, besides and beyond the merit of clearness, precision, and brevity, a certain felicity of diction; something which, had it not been common in his discourse, would have appeared the special *good luck* of falling without care of selection on the aptest words, cast in elegant combination, and producing an effect of beauty even when there was nothing expressly ornamental.

From the pleasure there is in causing and feeling surprise by the exaggeration of what *is* extraordinary into something absolutely marvellous, persons of Mr. Hall's acquaintance, especially in his earlier life, have taken great license of fiction in stories of his extemporaneous eloquence. It was not uncommon to have an admired

* I may refer, also, to the *reported* sermons given in the sixth volume of his Works; as to many of which any observant hearer of Mr. Hall will testify, though he should not have heard those particular sermons, that they very faithfully represent the preacher's extemporaneous diction.

sermon asserted to have been thrown off in an emergency on the strength of an hour's previous study. This matter has been set right in Dr. Gregory's curious and interesting note (prefixed to the sermon on Modern Infidelity) describing the preacher's usual manner of preparation; and showing that it was generally made with deliberate care.* But whatever proportion of the discourse was from premeditation, the hearer could not distinguish that from what was extemporaneous. There were no periods betraying, by a mechanical utterance, a mere recitation. Every sentence had so much the spirit and significance of present immediate thinking, as to prove it a living dictate of the speaker's mind, whether it came in the way of recollection, or in the fresh production of the moment. And in most of his sermons, the more animated ones especially, a very large proportion of what he spoke must have been of this immediate origination; it was impossible that less than this should be the effect of the excited state of a mind so powerful in thinking, so extremely prompt in the use of that power, and in possession of such copious materials.

Some of his discourses were of a calm temperament nearly throughout; even these, however, never failing to end with a pressing enforcement of the subject. But in a considerable portion of them (a large one, it is said, during all but a late period of his life) he warmed into emotion before he had advanced through what might be called the discussion. The intellectual process, the explications, arguments, and exemplifications, would then be animated, without being confused, obscured, or too much dilated, by that more vital element which we denominate sentiment; while striking figures, at intervals, emitted a momentary brightness; so that the understanding, the passions, and the imagination of the hear-

* Once, in a conversation with a few friends who had led him to talk of his preaching, and to answer, among other questions, one respecting this supposed and reported extemporaneous production of the most striking parts of his sermons in the early period of his ministry, he surprised us by saying, that most of them, so far from being extemporaneous, had been so deliberately prepared that the words were selected, and the construction and order of the sentences adjusted.

ers, were all at once brought under command, by a combination of the forces adapted to seize possession of each. The spirit of such discourses would grow into intense fervour, even before they approached the conclusion. The preacher had the great advantage for popular eloquence, of a temperament which permitted and prompted the emanation of his whole soul in public; not partaking, in the least, of the feeling which, whether of natural reserve or from secluded habits of life, may have had a repressive and cooling effect on some men's public addresses—a feeling as if some of the emotions of piety belonged too intimately and personally to the individual's own mind alone, or to the communications of a few congenial friends, to be committed to the imperfect sympathies of a large promiscuous assembly. When he became animated with his subject all the recesses of his mind appeared to open; all his emotions, affections, passions, were given forth in the most unreserved and unrestrained effusion.

In the most admired of his sermons, and invariably in all his preaching, there was one excellence, of a moral kind, in which few eloquent preachers have ever equalled, and none ever did or will surpass him. It was so remarkable and obvious, that the reader (if having been also a hearer of Mr. Hall) will have gone before me when I name—oblivion of self. The preacher appeared wholly absorbed in his subject, given up to its possession, as the single actuating principle and impulse of the mental achievement which he was as if unconsciously performing:—*as if* unconsciously; for it is impossible it could be literally so; yet his absorption was so evident, there was so clear an absence of every betraying sign of vanity, as to leave no doubt that reflection on himself, the tacit thought, "It is I that am displaying this excellence of speech," was the faintest action of his mind. His auditory were sure that it was in relation to his subject, and not to himself, that he regarded the feelings with which they might hear him.

What a contrast to divers showy and admired orators, whom the reader will remember to have seen in the pul-

pit elsewhere! For who has not witnessed, perhaps more times than a few, a pulpit exhibition, which unwittingly told that the speaker was in resolute competition with his sacred theme for precedence in the favour of his auditory? Who has not observed the glimmer of a self-complacent smile, partly reflected as it were, on his visage, from the plausible visages confronting him, and partly lighted from within, by the blandishment of a still warmer admirer? Who has not seen him swelling with a tone and air of conscious importance in some specially *fine* passage; prolonging it, holding it up, spreading out another and yet another scarlet fold, with at last a temporary stop to survey the assembly, as challenging their tributary looks of admiration, radiating on himself, or interchanged among sympathetic individuals in the congregation? Such a preacher might have done well to become a hearer for a while;—if indeed capable of receiving any corrective instruction from an example of his reverse; for there have been instances of preachers actually spoiling themselves still worse in consequence of hearing some of Mr. Hall's eloquent effusions; assuming, beyond their previous sufficiency of such graces, a vociferous declamation, a forced look of force, and a tumour of verbiage, from unaccountable failure to perceive, or to make a right use of the perception, that his sometimes impetuous delivery, ardent aspect, and occasionally magnificent diction, were all purely spontaneous from the strong excitement of the subject.

Under that excitement, when it was the greatest, he did unconsciously acquire a corresponding elation of attitude and expression; would turn, though not with frequent change, toward the different parts of the assembly, and, as almost his only peculiarity of action, would make one step back from his position (which, however, was instantly resumed) at the last word of a climax; an action which inevitably suggested the idea of the recoil of heavy ordnance.* I mention so inconsiderable a cir-

* In sermons plainly and almost exclusively exegetical, or in which bodily disorder repressed his characteristic energy, he would often keep nearly one posture, looking straight forward, during the whole service. At all times, his gesture was clear of every trace of art and intention.

cumstance, because I think it has somewhere lately been noticed with a hinted imputation of vanity. But to the feeling of his constant hearers, the cool and hypercritical equally with the rest, it was merely one of those effects which emotion always produces in the exterior in one mode or another, and was accidentally become associated with the rising of his excitement to its highest pitch, just at the sentence which decisively clenched an argument, or gave the last strongest emphasis to an enforcement. This action never occurred but when there *was* a special emphasis in what he said.

Thus the entire possession and actuation of his mind by his subject, evident in every way, was especially so by two signs: First; that his delivery was simply and unconsciously governed by his mind. When it was particularly animated, or solemn, or pathetic, or indignant, it was such, not by rule, intention, or any thought of rhetorical fitness; but in involuntary accordance with the strain of the thought and feeling. In this sense, he "spake as he was moved;" and consequently nothing in his manner of delivery was either out of the right place, or *in* it by studied adjustment.*

The other indication of being totally surrendered to the subject, and borne on by its impetus when the current became strong, was (in perfect contrast to what is described above) the rapid passing by, and passing away, of any striking sentiment or splendid image. He never

Indeed he had scarcely any thing of what is meant by gesticulation or action in the schools of oratory. It was what he never thought of for himself, and he despised its artificial exhibition in others, at least in preachers.

* I remember, at the distance of many years, with what a vivid feeling of the ludicrous he related an anecdote of a preacher, long since deceased, of some account in his day and connexion. He would, in preaching, sometimes weep, or seem to weep, when the people wondered why, as not perceiving in what he was saying any cause for such emotion, in the exact places where it occurred. After his death, one of his hearers, happening to inspect some of his manuscript sermons, exclaimed, "I have found the explanation; we used to wonder at the good Doctor's weeping with so little reason sometimes, as it seemed. In his sermons, there is written here and there in the margins, 'Cry here;' now I verily believe the Doctor sometimes mistook the place, and that was the cause of what appeared so unaccountable."

detained it in view by reduplications and amplifying phrases, as if he would not let it vanish so soon; as if he were enamoured of it, and wanted his hearers to be so for his sake; as if he wished to stand a while conspicuous by its lustre upon him. It glistened or flashed a moment and was gone.

The shining points were the more readily thus hastened away, as they intimately belonged to that which was passing. They occurred not as of arbitrary insertion, but with the appropriateness of a natural relation. However unexpectedly any brilliant idea might present itself, its impression was true and immediate to the purpose. Instead of arresting and diverting the attention to itself, as a thing standing out, to be separately admired for its own sake, it fell congenially into the train, and augmented without disturbing the effect. The fine passage would, indeed, in many instances, admit of being taken apart, and would in a detached state retain much of its beauty; but its greatest virtue was in animating the whole combination of sentiments. Mr. Hall's imagination always acted in direct subservience to his intellectual design.

A seriousness of spirit and manner was an invariable characteristic of his preaching, whatever were the topic, or occasion, or place; or preceding social intercourse, or temporary mood of his feelings. As his conversation often abounded with wit, in the strictest sense of the term, with the accompaniment of humour, both frequently playing into satire, in which he was not a little formidable, it has been justly wondered that nothing of this kind appeared in his sermons. I now wish I had ventured to ask him how this happened; whether it was that he had determined, on principle, to forbid himself all strokes and sparkles of that amusing faculty, as in every case detrimental to the effect of preaching; or that no witty turns or fancies did really ever occur to him during that exercise. However the case might be, all the repeaters of his witty vivacities and severities have forborne, as far as I ever heard, to report any one of them as a sentence of a sermon. No more than a single

instance is within my own recollection of any thing devious on this side from his accustomed tenour: it was a most biting sarcasm at the hypocritical cant of those wealthy persons who pretend a concern for the promotion of the Christian cause, but, under the affectation of a pious trust in Providence for that promotion, take good care to hold fast all but some parsimonious driblets of their money.

The absorbing seizure of his faculties by his subject, when it was prosecuted at uninterrupted length, carried him sometimes, I suspected, into a peculiar and extraordinary state of mind for a public speaker. It appeared to me not unfrequently, that his ideas pressed into his view so much in the character of living realities, that he lost all distinct sense of the presence of the congregation; so that he had for a while no more than a general and almost unconscious recognition of them as listening to him. His look at such times was that of a person so withdrawn to something within, that he is evidently taking no notice of what his eyes appear to fall upon. In confirmation that the case was so, I remember instances in which, being asked, after the service, whether he had not been grievously annoyed by an almost incessant and most thoughtlessly unrepressed coughing in many parts of the congregation, with other offensive and more voluntary noises, which had destroyed a third part at the least of his sentences for the hearing of a great proportion of the assembly, he said he had not been at all aware there was any such annoyance. It needs not to be observed, to those who have heard him, how necessary it was rendered by the defect of clear strong sound in his voice, when not forcibly exerted, that no other sounds should interfere.

At other times, however, he was in every sense present to his auditory, and spoke to them in pointed address; especially when a hortatory application at the end made them all feel that he was earnestly desirous to instruct, impress, and persuade. I may have occasion to advert again, with a somewhat different reference, to the circumstance of his mental abstraction.

It has been observed that he had the command of ample and various resources for illustration and proof. The departments from which he drew the least, might be the facts and philosophy of the material world. His studies had been directed with a strong and habitual preference to the regions of abstraction and metaphysics; and he furnished a fine example of the advantage which may be derived from such studies to the faculty for theological and moral discussions, by a mind at the same time too full of ardour, sentiment, and piety, to be cooled and dried into an indifference to every thing but the most disembodied and attenuated speculation. The advantage, as exemplified by him, of the practice and discipline of dealing with truth in the abstract, where a severe attention is required to apprehend it as a real subsistence, to see and grasp it, if I may so speak, in tangible forms, might be noted as twofold. First (that which has been anticipated in former remarks), the utmost precision in every thing he uttered. He could express each dictate of thought in perfect freedom from doubt whether it might not be equivocal; whether it might not be of loose import and vague direction, instead of strictly to the point; whether it might not involve some latent inconsistency within itself or in its immediate conjunction with another idea; whether it were exactly the very thing he intended. It was of complete formation in his understanding; it had its including line and limit, instead of being confused with something else. As it was once happily said by himself of Johnson, "he shone strongly on the angles of a thought." The consequence of his rigorous habits of thinking thus came with eminent value into discourse addressed and intelligible to ordinary good sense, where there was no obvious intervention of that refined speculation which was nevertheless contributing, in effect, so much to the clearness and strength of its consistence. The quality which might be called philosophic or metaphysic in the interior source, became a popular excellence in the result.

But secondly: besides the distinctness and precision

of all the particulars of thought in detail, that exercise of abstract speculation had brought him into possession and mastery of those general principles, in virtue of which these particular sentiments must have their authority. It is not at all necessary, in any ordinary course of instruction, to be continually tracing the particular back, for its verification, to the general; but it is a great advantage to be able to do so when it *is* necessary, as it sometimes will be. He could do this; he knew from what original truths could be deduced the varieties of sentiment which the speaker utters in unqualified assertion, as not liable to be questioned. Any of them, not self-evident, he could have abstracted into a proximate principle in a generalization, and that again resting on a still deeper or ultimate one. He had seen down to the basis, and therefore was confident of the firmness of what he stood upon; unlike a man who is treading on a surface which he perceives or suspects to be hollow, and is ignorant and fearful of what there may be underneath. Or, to change the figure, he could trace the minor outermost ramifications of truth downward into the larger stems; and those larger into the main trunk and the root. This conscious ability of the preacher, or any other discourser, to sustain upon first principles what he is advancing with the freedom of unhesitating assertion and assumption, will impart an habitual assurance of safety while he is expatiating thus in what may be called the outward, free, and popular exposition of his subject.

It is presumed that this representation of the use he made, in sermons, of his power and habits of abstract speculation, may suffice to prevent a notion, in the minds of any of our readers who may seldom or never have heard him, that he was in a specific sense a philosophical or metaphysical preacher. He did often indeed (and it was a distinguishing excellence equally of his talking, preaching, and writing) point to some general principle, and briefly and plainly show how it authorized an opinion. Occasionally, in a more than usually argumentative discourse, he would draw out a more extended de-

duction. He would also cite from the doctrines of philosophy, with lucid application, some law of the human mind (for instance, and especially that of association). But still it was far more a *virtual* than a formal result of his abstruser studies that pervaded his preaching.

His intimate acquaintance with many of the greatest authors, whom he had studied with a sentiment of reverence, and whose intellectual and religious wealth was largely drawn into his own capacious faculties, contributed to preclude an ostentation of originality. His sermons would make, on cultivated hearers, a general impression of something new, in the sense of being very different, by eminent superiority, from any common character of preaching; but the novelty would appear less to consist in absolute origination, than in the admirable power of selection and combination. It was not exhibited in a frequency of singularly bold prominent inventions, in the manner of the new mountains and islands sometimes suddenly thrown up on tracts of the globe; but rather in that whole construction of the performance by which the most appropriate topics, from whatever quarter, were brought into one array, were made imposing by aggregation, strong by unity of purpose, and often bright by felicitous apposition; in short, were so plastically ordered as to assume much of the character of a creation. It is probable that if his studies had been of slighter tenour, if his reading had been less, or more desultory, if his faculties had been suffered to run more loose, his discourses would have more abounded with ideas starting out, as it were singly, with an aspect like nothing ever seen before. His mental ground was cultivated too industriously and regularly for substantial produce, to leave room for those often beautiful wild flowers which spring spontaneously in a fertile half-wrought soil. His avowed indifference to poetry might be taken as one indication of a mind more adapted to converse with the substantialities of truth, than to raise phantoms of invention. Perhaps the most striking feature of his originality was seen in his talent (like the che-

mistry which brings a latent power into manifestation and action) of drawing from some admitted principle a hitherto unthought-of inference, which affects the whole argument of a question, and leads to a conclusion either new or by a new road.

While he availed himself in his sermons of the powers and means of reason, he constantly referred, I believe with an increased explicitness in the more advanced periods of his ministry, to Revelation as the supreme and final authority. No preacher, or writer on subjects of divinity, was ever more faithful to the principle that all doctrines professing to be christian, must, both in their statement and proof, be founded on the Scriptures, whatever further light or corroboration they may admit from independent reason, or from matter of fact. It is understood that it cost him, at an early season of his life, a great effort, with respect to some particular opinions, to subdue his speculative disposition to such an uncompromising submission to that authority, as to renounce not only the presumptions which place themselves in contravention to the Scriptures, but all the expedients of a forced or evasive interpretation of them. But the submission became absolute and perpetual; and in this spirit he maintained through life so assiduous a practice of studying the Bible, that he acquired a remarkable facility for citing from every part of it, in the course of his preaching, the passages most pertinent for evidence or enforcement of whatever he was advancing. It would often strike the hearers that probably no texts could have been found in the whole book more exactly to the purpose. Though he studied the Scriptures critically, he was sparing of learned criticism in the pulpit; never resorted to it but when he saw a question of some importance involved in a right or wrong construction or interpretation; and then with the greatest possible brevity. In some few of the instances he might seem to rest too much of the weight of an argument on the acceptation of a single insulated expression; for he was not, from his ability to bring a copious induction of texts in proof of a doctrine, the less tenacious of any and

every one which he thought could be vindicated for an assertion or implication of it by a correct interpretation.

In his choice of subjects, a prevailing desire to do good directed him most frequently to those, or to select parts and views of those, that present themselves as of chief importance on the common field of christianity. When he took what appeared an insulated subject, of a peculiar and perhaps somewhat curious cast, he would seldom fail, while illustrating it in a manner appropriate to itself, to bring it at last, and by an unforced incidence, to coalesce with or merge in some grand generality or cardinal doctrine of christian faith. This method contributed to maintain a consistency in the doctrine and tendency of his diversified ministrations.

He insisted with the utmost emphasis on the principle that christianity, instead of being merely a circumstantial modification, or clearer exposition, or augmented sanction, or supplemental adjunct of religion, conceived as in its original subsistence in the relation between the Creator and a race not involved in moral evil, is an absolutely distinct and peculiar economy, appointed for a race that *is* in that disastrous condition, and constituted upon the essentially altered relation, the relation between man as a depraved guilty being and his Maker. In his judgment, any theory which does not acknowledge christianity in this express character, positively rejects it; with the guilt, to him who dares this rejection, of insulting the Almighty, and the calamity of being self-doomed to meet the righteous Judge on an interdicted ground, a fatal ground, therefore, where justice will be apart from mercy. From his conviction of the importance of this principle of the peculiarity of the christian economy, he brought continually in view the doctrines which *constitute* its peculiarity. The scheme of mediation; the Mediator's character, in the various views and lights in which it can be displayed, of dignity and humiliation, of majesty and benignity; his vicarious sacrifice for the atonement of sin; were the subjects of his very marked and habitual preference. On the last of them

he enlarged in such extent and frequency, that, with the same perfect conviction as himself of its vital and transcendent importance, I sometimes thought there was hardly a due proportion yielded to the correlative subjects—to that extent and peremptoriness of the requirements of the divine law, that condition of the human nature, that actual existence and stupendous amount of guilt, which are the *cause* that there is a *necessity* for an atonement.

His practice, just noticed, of prosecuting the discussion of particular subjects, while in a manner strictly appropriate to each as a separate theme, yet also with a bearing toward an ultimate combination with some essential principle of Christianity, conduced to keep almost constantly in view the evangelical principles, those which are peculiarly characteristic of the mediatorial economy; for these were very commonly the points to which the various courses of thought running through his different sermons were made to tend, and where they fell in confluence.

His system of theological tenets (*creed* is an ill-favoured term) was strictly orthodox, on the model of what has come to be denominated Moderate Calvinism. With the other conspicuous points, the doctrine of the Trinity,* the divinity of Christ, the atonement, and justification by faith alone, he held the more distinctively Calvinistic doctrine of predestination; though I cannot answer for the precise terms in which he would have stated it; but I presume he would have accepted those employed in the articles of the Church of England. In preaching he very rarely made any express reference to that doctrine, and his recognition of it by implication was too indistinct for toleration from the rigidly Calvinistic hearers of any preacher not privileged by talents and public favour to bear down all censorial pretensions.

Under our total ignorance of divine decrees, our ignor-

* An exception is to be made in this article for an opinion at one time held by him, and, in one of his letters, I think, named by him *Dualism*, but surrendered long before the decline of his life. That opinion was, that the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as a divine energy, or agency, instead of a personal subsistence.

ance of all but the *general* purpose of the Almighty in the promulgation of the gospel, he considered that men are to be addressed as rational beings, on subjects of which, unless they will practically renounce that property of their nature, they must apprehend the vast importance; subjects which, as well as appealing to their coolest reason, ought to be of mighty force to press on the conscience and the passions; to which it were, consequently, the last absurdity to decline summoning that reason, and arousing those passions. He was therefore exempt from all those restrictions, in respect to the mode of presenting and urging the overtures of redemption, which have been imposed on some good men of the Calvinistic faith by a concern for systematic consistency. He took the utmost liberty in this strain of inculcation; exhorting, inviting, entreating, expostulating, remonstrating; in language of nearly the same tenour as that which might be employed by an Arminian preacher; with the exception, of course, of that notion of free-will, which recurs with such laborious iteration in the preaching of that order, and which was excluded from his faith equally by theological and philosophical reasons. This non-advertence in his sermons to the Calvinistic tenet, was not from any secret consciousness that the belief of it is essentially incongruous with an unrestrained freedom of inculcation; it was not that he might enjoy a license for inconsistency through the device of keeping one or two incompatible things out of sight; but he judged that neither the doctrine itself, nor the process of reasoning to prove the belief of it consistent with the most unrestricted language of exhortation, could be made a profitable part of popular instruction. He deemed it authority enough for his practice, independently of all abstracted reasoning on the subject, that he had the example of the divinely inspired preachers urging the demands of the gospel on the unbelievers and the wicked, in the most unmeasured terms of exhortation, the predestinating decrees of heaven set out of the question; and that in modern experience it is a notorious fact, that those preachers of the Calvinistic school (for one memorable

example, Whitfield) who have nevertheless availed themselves of this freedom to the utmost extent, have been far beyond all comparison more successful in effecting the great object of preaching, than those who have, somewhat presumptuously, charged themselves with so much responsibility respecting the unknown determination of the Almighty, that they must not call men indiscriminately to faith and repentance lest they should contravene his sovereign purposes;—I might say, rather, forfeit the dignity of coinciding with them.

Perhaps it would not have been expected from Mr. Hall's great capacity, that he should be habitually indisposed to dwell or expatiate long near the borders of the remoter, darker tracts, of the regions of religious contemplation. Such, however, appears to have been the fact. If the cause were inquired, undoubtedly one thing that withheld or withdrew him was, a consideration of usefulness, a preference for what was most adapted to be beneficial to his own religious discipline and to the best interests of others. He was amply informed and warned, by his knowledge of the history of philosophy and theology, of the mischiefs of a restless, presumptuous, interminable speculation, a projection of thought, beyond the limits of ascertainable truth. But there was a cause more radical in his mental constitution. That constitution was not predominantly either imaginative or contemplative; it was *intellectual*, in the strictest sense; in the (perhaps arbitrary) sense, that the matter of his speculations must be what he could distinctly understand, what he could survey in such form and order as to admit of propositions and reasons; so that the speculative process lost its interest with him if carried into a direction, or if exceeding the limit, where it could no longer be subjected to the methods of proof; in other words, where it ceased to comprehend and reason, and turned into conjecture, sentiment, and fancy. He seemed to have no ambition to stretch out his intellectual domain to an extent which he could not occupy and traverse, with some certainty of his movements and measurements. His sphere was very wide, expanded to one circle beyond an-

other, at each of which in succession he left other men behind him, arrested by the impassable line; but he was willing to perceive, and even desirous to verify, his own ultimate boundary; and when he came to the barrier where it was signified to him, "Thus far, and no further," he stopped, with apparently much less of an impulse than might have been expected in so strong a spirit, to seek an outlet, and attempt an irruption into the dubious realms beyond.

With a mind so constituted and governed, he was less given than many other men of genius have been to those visionary modes of thought; those musings exempt from all regulation; that impatience of aspiration to reach the vast and remote; that fascination of the mysterious, captivating by the very circumstance of eluding; that fearful adventuring on the dark, the unknown, the awful; "those thoughts that wander through eternity," which have often been at once the luxury and the pain of imaginative and highly endowed spirits, discontented with their assigned lot in this tenebrious world. No doubt, in his case, piety would have interfered to restrain such impatience of curiosity, or audacity of ambitious thinking, or indignant strife against the confines of our present allotment, as would have risen to a spirit of insubordination to the divine appointment. And possibly there were times when this interference was required; but still the structure of his faculties, and the manner of employing them to which it determined him, contributed much to exempt him from that passion to go beyond the mortal sphere which would irreligiously murmur at the limitation. His acquiescence did not seem at least to cost him a strong effort of repression.

This distinction of his intellectual character was obvious in his preaching. He was eminently successful on subjects of an elevated order, which he would expand and illustrate in a manner which sustained them to the high level of their dignity. This carried him near some point of the border of that awful darkness which encompasses, on all sides, our little glimmering field of knowledge; and then it might be seen how aware he was of

his approach, how cautiously, or shall I say instinctively? he was held aloof, how sure not to abandon the ground of evidence, by a hazardous incursion of conjecture or imagination into the unknown. He would indicate how near, and in what direction, lay the shaded frontier; but dared not, did not seem even tempted, to invade its "majesty of darkness."

This procedure, in whatever proportion owing to his intellectual temperament, or to the ascendancy of religion, will be pronounced wise for a *general* practice. If, however, he could have allowed himself in some degree of exception, it would have been gratifying to a portion of his hearers. There are certain mysterious phenomena in the moral economy of our world, which compel, and will not release, the attention of a thoughtful mind, especially if of a gloomy constitutional tendency. Wherever it turns, it still encounters their portentous aspect; often feels arrested and fixed by them as under some potent spell; making an effort, still renewed and still unavailing, to escape from the appalling presence of the vision. Now it was conceived, that a strenuous deliberate exertion of a power of thought like his, after he had been so deeply conversant with important and difficult speculations, might perhaps have contributed something to alleviate this oppression. Not, of course, that it should be dreamed that his, or any still stronger human intelligence, should be able to penetrate with light, the black clouds which overshadow our system. But it was imagined possible for such force of reason to impart somewhat of an extenuating quality to the *medium* through which they are beheld, and through which they might then be beheld with a less painful and total prostration of spirit. It might have been an invaluable service, it was thought, if his whole strength and resources had been applied to display comprehensively the nature, the extent, the solidity, of the ground on which faith may rest with a firm confidence in the goodness of the sovereign Governor, notwithstanding all the strange and awful phenomena of our economy.*

* It may be mentioned, in further explanation of the indisposition

This disinclination to adventure into the twilight of speculation was shown in respect to subjects of less formidable mystery, of solemn indeed, but rather attractive than overawing character. For instance, the mode, the condition, of that conscious existence after death, of which, as a fact, he was so zealous an assertor against the dreary dogma which consigns the soul to insensibility in the separate state; if indeed it *be* any existent state of an intelligence when all we know of its attributes is abolished. It would have been gratifying, and might have been beneficial for serious impression, to see some gleams of his vigorous thought thrown upon the border of that scene of our destiny, so obscure, but at the same time so near, and of transcendent interest; to see the reserved and scattered intimations of the sacred oracles brought into combination, and attempted to be reduced to something approaching to the form of a theory; to see how far any conjectural imaginations could be accompanied by reasons from analogy, and any other principle of probability; with a citation, perhaps, of certain of the least arbitrary and fanciful of the visions of other inquisitive speculators, commented on as he would have commented. But he did not appear to partake of the intense curiosity with which the inquiries and poetical musings of some pious men have been carried into the subject. He seemed, beyond what might have been expected in relation to a matter which lies across the whole breadth of our prospect, and so closely at hand, content to let it remain a *terra incognita* till the hour that puts an end to conjecture. It will be understood that this is mentioned, not with any meaning of animadversion, but as exemplifying that peculiarity of his mental character by which he appeared disinclined to pursue any inquiries beyond

noted above, that in spite of the long and often severe persecution of bodily pain, his temperament was cheerful and buoyant. He had a remarkable facility of finding or making sources and occasions of pleasurable feeling, and averting his mind from gloomy subjects; insomuch that he appeared to be, even on the mere strength of this temperament, much less subject than might have been expected of so enlarged a capacity of thought, to be invaded by the dark and fearful forms which those subjects can assume.

the point where substantial evidence fails. The regret of some of his hearers was, that he should not oftener be willing to exert his whole strength to try whether that point be really fixed where it appears and is assumed to be. They would have been gratified to see him undertaking sometimes the discussion of subjects, which they would have deprecated any attempt upon by men of ordinary ability. While so superior a mental engine, if I may be allowed the expression, was in their hands, they wished they could *make the most* of its powers.

I have deferred to the last some additional observations, which I shall attempt with considerable difficulty; partly from a doubt whether I may be able to render them plainly intelligible; and partly from apprehension that they may not please some of those who most admired Mr. Hall; of whose talents, however, no man's admiration was higher than mine.

The general purport of what I would say is this, that while his preaching was superlatively excellent in many of its qualities, it was not, from a defect in certain important ones, the best adapted for salutary efficacy. A short indication of what I would allege would be, that it was too general and theoretic, neglectful too often of the required *conditions of application*, the distinctions, exceptions, qualifications; in other words, of the casuistry in which every subject of a practical nature is involved; that it presented things too much in unbroken breadth and mass; that it was apt to exceed, in the most eloquent parts, the allowed license of exaggerations; that it was not kept in due relation to the realities of life; that, while it was most excellent in the discrimination of topics, sentiments, arguments, it did not discriminate and individualize human characters; that therefore it did not maintain an intimate commerce with the actual condition of the hearers.

It were superfluous to repeat how pre-eminently he displayed, in the perspicuous and convincing statement, developement, and confirmation of truth, the primary excellence of preaching, as it is of all instruction; or how earnestly the practical interest of the doctrine, in its

general bearing, at least, was often enforced toward the conclusion of his sermons. The defect, which, nevertheless, I am wishing to mark as not excluded by such rare merit, was, that (as a general fact, and with exceptions) his preaching did not bring and keep the people under a closely *disciplinary* process. It allowed them too much of the privilege of the spectators of a fine and well ordered series of representation, of such a nature that they can look on at ease from any similar disturbance to that of the king in Hamlet, at the sight of the acted garden scene.

A consideration of the whole design of preaching might suggest something approaching to a model of what would seem the most probably calculated to attain its several ends, in combination to one grand purpose. We may regard the preacher as holding a kind of comprehensive jurisdiction over the spiritual and moral condition of the congregation, who are a mingled assemblage of all varieties of that condition. Should not then, the best mode of ministration, for beneficial effect, be that which applies itself to this condition, not only either generally in the mass, or as viewed in the two divisions of religious and irreligious, but also with a special recognition of those varieties?

There needs not here be said so self-evident a thing as that the great primary truths, forming, if I may express it so, *the constitution* of religion, should be carefully and amply set forth; that, in a word, the *theory* of Christianity as a whole, and in its principal branches, should be kept conspicuous in the people's view. But while the principles of which the Christian faith consists are to be often stated and constantly recognised, as the general ground-work of all that belongs to religion, what a large account there is of more special matters, on which, and on each of which, it is most important to call men's reason and conscience into exercise. There are the various causes, distinguishable and assignable ones, which frustrate the exhibition of religious truth, and may be so commented on as to show *how* they frustrate it. There is the sad catalogue of the perversities and deceits of the

heart; there are the distortions and presumptions of prejudice; the principles which, in disguised form perhaps, and afraid of audacious avowal, but of malignant essence, react against the divine authority; the subterfuges of insincerity; the various ways in which men evade conviction, falsify in effect the truth to which they assent in terms, or delude themselves in their estimates of their own spirit and conduct. There is the estrangement from reflection, the extreme reluctance to honest self-examination. There is also, in the majority of any large congregation, many of those who make a direct profession of personal religion not excepted, an indistinct apprehension, and a lax application, of the principles and rules of Christian morality. These last, together with the state of men's notions and habits in relation to them, are within the province of the religious instructor; unless the universally, cogently, and even minutely perceptive character of revelation be a grand impertinence.

It is of the utmost importance that things like these should occupy a large space in the ministration. They claim to be made the subject of the preacher's best exertion, to show what they are, by illustrations verified upon the actual state of human beings, and how they interfere with religion in all its doctrines and applications. Any one of these here noted comprehends a whole class of particulars, important enough to be, each of them separately, a matter of the most useful discussion for the longest sermon. And if this be true, the majority of the evangelical teachers of our congregations seem very far from being aware (in respect especially to what belongs to the moral department of the great Christian school) of the extent of either the resources or the duties of their office.

But besides the propriety of discoursing on such things formally and at large, there is a valuable use to be made of them in a secondary and more incidental way, by adverting to them, any of them, as the case may suggest, in short and pointed reference, when any lesson of the religious discipline can by means of them be more strongly fastened on men's minds; on minds, which will play

loose from its hold if such expedients be not employed to strike and grasp them. Through whatever subject (except the most exclusively speculative) the Christian instructor can direct his course, considerations relating to such matters are, some or other of them, near at hand, to admonish him of something which is to be taken account of, or he is debarred from obtaining possession of the inner man. And therefore it would be well that, instead of passing by these considerations unnoticed, and prosecuting with exclusive attention the pure *rationale* of his subject, he should admit them to interfere with his progress, should implicate such of them as lie nearest to his track with the train of his observations; sometimes with a short interruption and suspension of that train, in order to take in and insist on an accessory consideration which may turn the subject with a more special pointedness on the hearers than would be done by its strictly regular prosecution. He might thus, without losing sight of the *general* objects of his discourse, give it a particularity, a pressure at critical points, a distinctness of arrest on the attention and conscience.

Now Mr. Hall had, both by the cast of his mind and his addiction to prolonged speculative studies, an inaptitude to such a manner of preaching. His subject took the form of an intellectual theme, homogeneous, continuous, and nowhere allowing a diversion from its order, or a breaking up among its topics to turn any of them for a few moments to a peculiar and insulated use; or admitting the intervention of any thing which would bring the progress to a stand. The channel of his thoughts was so straight on, and the current so full and rapid, that there could be no refluxes and eddies. He entered on his subject with a clear prospect over it to the end; the interest, to himself, of his movement in prosecution of it, was in throwing his mind still forward on the next succeeding part, with a propulsion augmented by each as he passed through it; and he would have been impatient of any thing that should check or turn aside his career. He could not remit and draw in, to stay awhile, so to speak, with some one important observation, to give it

individually an aggravated stress, to kindle it into an intense light, deliberately held close to the minds before him, penetrating to the recesses as a trial of the spirit, revealing unsuspected, or but slightly suspected, qualities in the feelings, the motives, the habits; and indicating unthought-of relations between these and the principles of Christianity, the rules of duty, or the conditions of safety. Still pressing vigorously onward, he could not make a pause to revert unexpectedly on what he had just said; and by an appeal to the hearers for its truth, or by a brief strong inference from it, render it more impressive than it could be as hastily passing away. He could not abate his movement so as to address them with a pointed interrogation, solemn or familiar in a manner as if waiting for a reply; thus breaking in upon any tendency there might be to their yielding themselves to be carried along in a pleasing reverie of admiration and vague assent; drawing them into something like a mental dialogue with him on the point, and awaking them to reflect whether they should make, or were making, any application of it to themselves. That extraordinary degree of withdrawment from recognition of the local scene, when his mind was in its full race, which has been noticed before rather as a circumstance of manner than as affecting the character of his preaching, contributed much to what is here attempted to be described. He did feel, I repeat, a benevolent interest for the congregation, as a *general* sentiment, and at times it would manifest itself expressly and even pathetically; but I still deem it a fact, that during a large proportion of his public exercise, and especially in the seasons of highest excitement, *the subject itself,* in its own absorbing possession of him, was the grand interest. It was by *that* that he was filled, elated, and borne along, with no more than a very general consciousness of being in communication with an auditory. The train of his thoughts, therefore, swept on at a certain altitude, as it were, in the air, rather than proceeded on a level and in contact with the people, in a series of arresting inculcations and inquisitions.

I have said that he did not *individualize* human characters. While he had a deep insight into the structure of human nature as a species, his preaching would sometimes have suggested the remark that was made on a certain philosopher, that "he understood *man*, but not *men*"—I say, his *preaching;* for a different apprehension was received from his conversation. He had been acquainted less or more with a very extensive variety of persons, including most of the differences seen in society; had a remarkably exact remembrance of them; and showed, by his characteristic descriptions and anecdotes, that he was not a superficial, though he was not a studiously intentional, observer. At all times he was interested by facts, witnessed or related, which exemplified a common property, or a peculiar modification, of this strange nature of ours. It was therefore a cause of wonder, notwithstanding all that was so apparent of his habits of abstraction and generalization, that so many forms of the good and evil of humanity, accumulated within the ample magazine of his materials, should not be brought into service, divested, of course, of the peculiarities that would betray individual portraiture, and a little idealized into representatives of classes, but still of such genuine living features, that the people might recognise them as things in actual existence. Forms of character thus discriminately shaped from matter of fact, would stand forth exposing what human nature is, not merely as a *general* subject for religious and moral treatment, but also in those special modifications to which the discipline should be applied. It may then be applied with a peculiar, and, in the hands of an able man, a striking appropriateness; it will be seen to be fitted to the part: and there can be no question whether its force and probable efficacy will be much in proportion to this evidently specific pertinence. By this practice he who is desirous that truth may strike, stands much nearer to his mark, leaving less room for the shaft to pass harmlessly by in a slanting direction, than if he took a general aim from a distance. Let the blended mass of human character be thus resolved into classes, not so small certainly that the

address, in order to be appropriate to each, must be frittered into minute and almost trifling particulars, yet so circumscribed that it may bear on each in one definite manner, and many persons will be made to find their own place, and find themselves brought to account, who would remain quite at their ease under a theoretic generality in the administration of the religious and moral jurisdiction; who might even approve and applaud the very lecture by which they were arraigned and condemned, in perfect impunity from any whisper of the admonition, "Thou art the man." It was to be regretted that the singularly compact conformation, and the speculative and abstract propensity, of Mr. Hall's mind, should so much have precluded his great talents and excellent purpose from this resource for augmenting the efficacy of preaching. It might be anticipated from the nature of the case, and it was verified by observation, that too many of the attendants witnessed some of the brightest displays rather with the feeling of looking at a fine picture than of being confronted by a faithful mirror; and went away equally pleased with a preacher that was so admirable, and with themselves for having the intelligence and taste to admire him.*

* A little circumstance, told me a day or two after his last sermon, which was considered of signal intellectual power, and which I have always regretted that I was prevented hearing, may not improperly be mentioned as somewhat in point to what is attempted in these paragraphs. The subject was the sin and absurdity of covetousness. After the service, one of the hearers observed to another, "An admirable sermon—yet why was *such* a sermon preached? For probably not one person in the congregation, though it is not wanting in examples of the vice in question, would take the discourse as at all applicable to himself."—The preacher had employed his whole force on the love of money *as a pure and absolute principle*. The person who made the remark meant to say, that hardly any one will acknowledge to be, or indeed is *conscious* of being, actuated by this pure absolute principle, however tenacious of his money, or insatiably grasping at more. No; the passion enslaves and befools him under secondary and more plausible forms. He wishes to have the means of setting his family advantageously forward in the world; he says so, and thinks so, even though possibly unwilling to do any thing for them as yet. It is desirable to have the means of maintaining a respectable station in society. It is gratifying to be looked up to with the deference universally shown to wealth. Perhaps the man has had experience of straitened circumstances in early life, and cannot make too sure against its recurrence. There is

There was cause for observation on his manner of placing in contrast the two great divisions, the righteous and the wicked, christians and men of the world. There should be some essential test of the difference; but then what to do with all those appearances among the professedly better class, which betray so much likeness, after all to the worse? Nothing can be more perplexing to a thoughtful beholder of men as they are, who, in disregard of all system, *must* take these signs for what they plainly import; and what they plainly import is, that whatever be the essentially distinguishing principle of the separation, there are, in numbers whom he may not in a judgement of charity pronounce to be no Christians, many grievous and habitual approximations to those who confessedly are none. At times, the whole subject will almost assume under his view, the appearance of an affair of *gradation*, from the maximum on one side, and the minimum on the other, divided by no wide interval at the point of approach. If he be a public teacher of religion, and in that capacity under a solemn responsibility for the estimates to be entertained of the Christian character, and of themselves, by his hearers, he will have a severe exercise for his caution and discrimination. He may overlook, if he will, the unhappy mixture and competition of evil with the good in the better division of actual human characters; and indulge himself in the pleasure of constructing and setting up an image, not like that visionary one, from whose golden head there was a deterioration of materials downward to the baseness of clay, but wholly of gold, the *ideal* of all the Christian graces and virtues assembled in harmony and perfection. But to what end? Is it that the people,

much liability to hazard and losses, and it is prudent to be well provided. It would be a miserable thing to suffer penury in old age.—Now, an invective against the love of money, to be practically useful, would seize and expose it in those modes of its operation, under which it hides or palliates its true quality, and beguiles out of all self-suspicion the most desperate idolater of Mammon. A lecture on covetousness, which should concentrate its whole rebuke on the love of money taken abstractedly, might even do mischief; for every hearer who could say he did not *so* love money, would confidently infer, that therefore he was not guilty of covetousness.

when they recover themselves to consideration, may, with grief on the part of the pious and benevolent, and with malignant pleasure on the part of the profane, adjudge the greater proportion of those who have a general acceptance as religious persons, not to be truly such? Or is it, that persons sincerely intent on religion, actuated in some considerable degree by its spirit, but painfully conscious of a vast disparity to the pattern so splendidly exhibited, should therefore resign themselves to despondency? Or what else? What else?—unless, after looking up to this consummate pattern, the teacher, taking a descending track of thought, shall exert his best judgement to show, through several degrees cautiously followed downward, how the genuine principle may exist where there is much at variance with it; insisting at each grade, on the manner in which it is essential for that principle to act, in proof that it is really there notwithstanding the offensive things that keep their place with it; and solemnly protesting against the fatal propensity to find a ground of safety at the last lowest point at which it may be hoped that the principle may still be not absolutely incompatible with that with which it is inconsistent.

It appeared a serious defect in Mr. Hall's preaching, that he practically took on him too little of this responsibility. In temporary oblivion of the rule that theoretic description should keep existing fact so much in view that a right adjustment may be made between them, he would expatiate in eloquent latitude on the Christian character, bright and "full-orbed" in all its perfections, of contempt of the world, victory over temptation, elevated devotion, assimilation to the divine image, zeal for the divine glory, triumphant faith, expansive charity, sanctity of life; without an intimation, at the time or afterward, that all this, so sublime if it were realized, so obligatory as the attainment toward which a Christian should be, at whatever distance, aspiring, is yet unhappily to be subjected, on behalf of our poor nature, to a cautious discussion of modifications and degrees; especially when the anxious question comes to be, *What deficiencies prove a man to be no christian?*

Now a hearer, left to some coolness of thought, was tempted to say to himself, What do the people think of this?—if indeed they *do* think, if they be not beguiled away from reflection. How does it strike the many persons in this large assembly, who, respectable perhaps as men of the world, make no pretension to what is meant by personal religion; and how those others who despise or hate it, and would hardly endure to hear any thing about it but for the sake of the eloquence which they think might have been more worthily employed?* Are they, in imagination, carrying out this brilliant picture for test, or contrast, into the real world, where they have observed and descried, with no little vigilance, the culpable tempers habits, and proceedings, the inconsistencies, weaknesses, and errors, of many whom the preacher himself would be the last man to pronounce altogether destitute of piety? But if they do make this invidious use of the description, will they not with pernicious self-complacency assume, not exactly, perhaps, that the whole affair is altogether a fable, but, that unless there be super-emphatically "few that be saved," that if these sadly defective Christians may nevertheless be finally safe, there must, after all, be a standard so much more accommodating to human nature as it is, than that implied in the preacher's representation, as to allow a confidence that they are not even themselves in any formidable danger; since they only share the faults, they will say, and without making the high pretensions, of these professed Christians. Why *let* them go off with this mischievous assumption?

And how does it strike the persons here, who stand in the recognized accepted class of the religious? Have they, while hearing this elevated strain, any such thing as reflection on themselves? Is their conscience lulled by what might seem adapted in all reason to alarm it? Have they no secret monition—are the very serpents

* I recollect the instance of a gentleman expressing, at the conclusion of the public service, the highest admiration of the preacher, and adding, "What a pity Mr. Hall's great talents had not been destined to the Bar or the House of Commons, where he would have made so capital a figure?"

themselves that infest a corrupt and but imperfectly renovated nature, so charmed into stillness that there is no consciousness—of many things which this grand exemplar shines but to expose and condemn? What! is there no internal voice to accuse them, any of them, of such things as a proneness to an excessive love of the world, as coldness of devotion, reluctance of duty, insubordination to the divine will, lapses into a besetting sin, the indulgence of evil tempers, selfish competition with fellow-mortals, frequent forgetfulness of hereafter? If there be not; if their admiration of the beautiful image of Christian excellence in the abstract carry them away from all consciousness of what is unlike it in themselves, it is quite time to come down to a mode of address that shall turn their thoughts homeward, and bring them into a consideration of what they are virtually doing in admiring such a model; shall excite them to reflect, if they so admire one and another feature of it, what they should think of this and the other characteristic where the correspondence is to be sought in their own actual condition. It would be well to bring them to the questions of, What is the difference? and, Why such a difference? and, What would be the right feeling under the self-conviction of such a difference? Let them not be suffered to regard this bright model merely as the ideal representation of something so unattainable on earth, that they are absolved from any serious consideration whether, and how, they have formed a judgement of what *is* attainable and *must* be attained; what they are really wishing to attain; what they think they *have* attained; why it is no more; what are the conscious evils yet unsubdued; what they deem the proportion of those evils to be to the better part; how they measure that proportion, and ascertain the predominance of the good; and whether they be disposed to content themselves with that state of the case.

But if, on the contrary, this bright exhibition of the Christian character, instead of playing harmlessly over them like an aurora borealis, has sent its rays deeply into their soul, and is bringing more plainly to their own view

the evils lurking there, the sinful propensities, the spiritual disorders of whatever class, with the addition of the moral and practical ones resulting externally, in what manner are they adjusting that very serious contrast, so as to maintain a confidence that, nevertheless, on the whole the case is safe? No doubt it must be, by making very large allowances for the sad imperfection of our nature. But would it not be well for the Christian instructor to endeavour to take that somewhat hazardous process out of the hands of their self-love, by interfering himself in the adjudication of what may be conceded to a fallen nature, on such conditions as shall not essentially invalidate the demands of religion?

As the last observation I would take the liberty to make, I may note the same prevailing inadvertence to the realities of life in Mr. Hall's manner of representing the *happiness* conferred by religion; premising, as a thing somewhat of a piece with this particular, that he would sometimes indulge in language hardly consonant to either theory or experience in what it seemed to imply of the *facility* of entering, by a transition of spirit and action, on the Christian life. I will confess he did appear to me, in reference to this matter, to lose sight too much, when he surrendered himself to the animated current of his sentiments, of the desperate and obstinate alienation of the human soul from its Creator. It was not that he did not most fully believe this to be the condition of our nature, on the evidence of both Scripture and notorious fact; or that he did not hold, according to the strictest Calvinistic construction, the doctrine of a necessity of a special divine agency for men's conversion to a new spiritual state; but that, when his mind was kindled at the attraction and glories of religion, he would forget, for the time, both how lost are those attractions on a corrupt nature, and what a dreadful combination of influences there is to retain it in its aversion.

But, to revert to the specific topic, the representation of the *happiness* of the Christian character. He would describe, with a prolonged effusion of beautiful sentiment and language, the delightful confidence in the divine

favour, the harmony and communion of the pious spirit with its God and Saviour, the independence on sublunary things, the superiority to the cares and distractions of life, the serenity of trust in Providence under the greatest trials or most menacing presages, the cordial invariable acquiescence in the divine dispensations, the victory over the fear of death, the unclouded prospect into eternity. Now it needs not be said that such *would* be the felicities of a condition exalted to the absolute perfection of Christianity; or that the religious instructor should point to these elevations as the eminence toward which it is the tendency of religion to carry upward the human spirit, and toward which a Christian is to aspire, however remote his utmost ascent may be from reaching it. He may do well to cite from the memorials of good men, some of the examples most remarkably approaching to a practical evidence, that such is the felicity which it is in the nature of religion to impart. And he will have at once to reprove those who, regarding such a privileged existence as something like a visionary scene suspended in the sky, rather than a state partially attainable by mortals, are resting with a dull acquiescence in a poverty of religious enjoyment; and to console and animate those whose earnest aspirations are repressed by the consciousness how little they attain. But if, in describing the happiness of a Christian, he take it at its highest degree, to which the experience of the most devout men has risen only at some favoured seasons, (at least if they had much to do with the world's concerns,) and spread out the representation in imagery, all formed of the finest elements, omitting to advert in the most express manner as an indispensable part of his business, to the actual state of good men, so beset and overrun with things which deny them to be so happy, it would be inevitable for the supposed cool-minded hearer to have his thoughts once more looking off to matters of fact. He would say to himself, "It may be taken as certain, that many among the sincere Christians in this assembly are in circumstances which must make them listen to this unqualified representation with pain or with incredulity. Some of them

are harassed, without the possibility of escape, by the state of their worldly affairs; perhaps oppressed by disasters under which their fortitude shrinks, or seeing the approach of such as no prudence or effort can avail to prevent; anxiously awaiting a critical turn of events; vexed beyond the patience of Job by the untowardness, selfishness, or dishonesty encountered in their transactions. Some are enduring the cares and hardships of poverty; and thinking how much more easy is the eloquent inculcation, than the reduction to practice, of the precept to 'take no thought for the morrow.' Some are distressed by bad dispositions among their nearest kindred; perhaps by anticipations, grievous in proportion to their piety, of the conduct and ultimate destiny of their children. Some may have come here for an hour who are fixed in the sad situation of witnessing the slow but certain progress of persons, whose life is on all accounts most important to them, in a descent toward the grave. Some are experiencing, while strenuously maintaining, a severe conflict between the good and evil in their own minds. Some may be in mortifying recollection of lapses into which they have been betrayed. Some are of melancholic temperament; and while striving to keep hold of their faith and hope, are apt to see whatever concerns their welfare in an unfavourable view in every direction, and especially in looking forward to death. Some, of contemplative disposition, are often oppressed, even to a degree of danger to their piety, by the gloom which involves the economy of the world, where moral evil has been predominant through all the course of time. In short, it is probable that the much larger proportion of the religious persons now present are in no condition to allow a possibility of their yielding themselves in sympathy with the spirit of this celebration of the happiness of religion. Would it not, then, be a more useful manner of illustrating this subject, to carry it into a trial on the actual circumstances of the Christian life; to place it, with appropriate discriminations, by the side of the real situations of good men; to show that, notwithstanding all, religion *can* insure a *preponderance* of happiness;

to demonstrate *how* it can do so; to point out the most efficacious means, in each case respectively, and urge their diligent use; to suggest consolations for deficient success, with a note of admonition respecting such of its causes as require that reproof be mixed with encouragement? all the while keeping in view that condition of our existence on earth, which renders it inevitable that the happiness created even by religion, for the men most faithfully devoted to it, should not be otherwise than greatly incomplete?"

These observations have grown to a length beyond my intention or expectation; and I should have been better pleased if I could have felt assured, that a far less protracted criticism might suffice for an intelligible description of the nature and operation of certain things, in the character of Mr. Hall's ministration, which I had presumed to think not adapted, in the proportion of its eminent intellectual superiority, to practical effect.

It is not to be exacted of the greatest talents that they have an equal aptitude to two widely different modes of operation. Nor is any invidious comparison to be made between the respective merits of excelling in the one and in the other. But, indeed, it were impossible to make any comparative estimate that *should* be invidious to Mr. Hall, if the question were of intellect, considered *purely as a general element of strength.* To attain high excellence in the manner of preaching which I have indicated as what might be a more useful one than his, though it require a clear-sighted faculty disciplined in vigilant and various exercise, is within the competence of a mind of much more limited energy and reach than Mr. Hall's power and range of speculative thought. At the same time it is not to be denied, that such a mode of conducting the ministration, whatever were the talents employed, were they even of the highest order, would demand a much more laborious and complicated process than it cost our great preacher to produce his luminous expositions of christian doctrine, with those eloquent, but too general, practical applications into which the discussion changed

toward the close. Indeed, there is reason to believe that, besides the circumstances which I have noted as indisposing and partly unfitting him to adapt his preaching discriminatively to the states and characters of men as they are, another preventing cause was a repugnance to the kind and degree of labour required in such an operation. For some passages found in his writings appear to prove that his conception of the most effective manner of preaching was very considerably different from his general practice.* I repeat, his *general* practice;

* Several paragraphs might be cited from his sermon on the "Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister." I will transcribe two or three sentences.

"The epidemic malady of our nature assumes so many shapes, and "appears under such a variety of symptoms, that these may be considered as so many distinct diseases, which demand a proportionate variety in the method of treatment. . . . . . Without descending to such "a minute specification of circumstances as shall make our addresses "personal, they ought unquestionably to be characteristic; that the "conscience of the audience may feel the hand of the preacher searching it, and every individual know where to class himself. The "preacher who aims at doing good, will endeavour, above all things, to "insulate his hearers, to place each of them apart, and render it impossible for him to escape by losing himself in the crowd. . . . . . . It "is thus the Christian Minister should endeavour to prepare the tribunal of conscience, and turn the eyes of every one of his hearers on "himself."

To the same effect, there are several pages of advice to preachers, in the "Fragment on Village Preaching." The value of the whole section will be but partially apprehended from the following extracts.

"A notion prevails among some, that to preach the Gospel includes "nothing more than a recital or recapitulation of the peculiar doctrines "of Christianity. If these are firmly believed and zealously embraced, "they are ready to believe the work is done, and that all the virtues of "the christian character will follow by necessary consequence. Hence "they satisfy themselves with recommending holiness in general terms, "without entering into its particular duties; and this, in such a manner, "as rather to predict it as the result of certain opinions, than to enforce "it on the ground of moral obligation. . . . . . . The conscience is not "likely to be touched by general declamations on the evil of sin, and "the beauty of holiness, without delineation of character. . . . . . He "must know little of human nature, who perceives not the callousness "of the human heart, and the perfect indifference with which it can "contemplate the most alarming truths when they are presented in a "general abstract form. It is not in this way that religious instruction "can be made permanently interesting. It is when particular vices are "displayed as they appear in real life, when the arts of self-deception "are detected, and the vain excuses by which a sinner palliates his "guilt, evades the conviction of conscience, and secures a delusive

for it would be wrong to dismiss these comments without observing that he did, sometimes, discuss and illustrate a topic in a special and continued application to circumstances in the plain reality of men's condition. And when he did so it was with striking and valuable effect. I shall, for instance, never forget the admiration with which I heard a sermon, chiefly addressed to the young, from the text, "For every thing there is a time." Nothing could exceed the accuracy of delineation, and the felicitous management of language, with which he marked the circumstances, conjunctures, and temptations of real life; the specific interests, duties, dangers, vices; the consequences in futurity of early wisdom or folly; and the inseparable relation of every temporal and moral interest to religion; with an inculcation of which, conceived in faithful appropriateness to the preceding topics, he closed in an effusion of what merited to be irresistible pathos.* Sermons of a tenour to class them with this, were heard at intervals, not so wide but that the number might be somewhat considerable within the space of two or three years. It should be observed, however, that their construction was still not wholly diverse from his general manner. The style of address was not marked by rises and falls; did not alternate between familiarity and magisterial dignity; was not modified by varying impulses into a strain which, as was said of Chatham's eloquence, was of every kind by turns. It was sustained, unintermitted, of unrelaxing gravity, in one order of language. and, after a short progress from the commencement, constantly rapid in delivery. But still those sermons were cast in the best imaginable compromise between, on the one hand, the theoretic speculation and

" tranquillity: in a word, it is when the heart is forced to see in itself " the original of what is described by the apostle; and, perceiving " that the secrets of his heart are made manifest, he falls down, and " confesses that God is among us of a truth. The reproof which awa- " kened David from his guilty slumber, and made him weep and trem- " ble, turned not on the general evil of sin, but on the peculiar circum- " stances of aggravation, attending that which he had committed."

* One of the reported sermons in the sixth volume of his Works, that on the "Love of God," is a remarkable example of specific illustration, pointedly applied.

high-pitched rhetoric to which he was addicted, and, on the other, that recognition of what men actually are in situation and character, to which his mind did not so easily descend. They were the sermons which the serious and intelligent hearers regretted that people of every class, in many times the number of the actual congregation, should not have the benefit of hearing; and which it is now their deep and unavailing regret that he could not be induced to render a lasting, I might say a perennial, source of utility to the public.

I cannot be aware whether the opinions, or feelings less definite than opinions, of readers who have had the advantage of hearing Mr. Hall, will coincide with the observations ventured in these latter pages. Those who have heard him but very occasionally, will be incompetent judges of their propriety. I remember that at a time very long since, when I had not heard more perhaps than three or four of his sermons, I did not apprehend the justness, or, indeed, very clearly the import, of a remark on that characteristic of his preaching which I have attempted to describe, when made to me by his warm friend, and most animated admirer, Dr. Ryland; who said that Mr. Hall's preaching had, with an excellence in some respects unrivalled, the fault of being *too general;* and he contrasted it with that of Mr. Hall's father, who had erred on the side of a too minute particularity.—But whether these strictures be admitted or questioned, I will confidently take credit with every candid reader, for having, as in the character of historian, and disclaiming the futile office of panegyrist, deliberately aimed at a faithful description of this memorable preacher, as he appeared during that latter period of his public ministrations, to which my opportunity of frequent attendance on them has unfortunately been confined.

I can hardly think it should be necessary to protest against such a misunderstanding of these latter pages as should take them to imply, that Mr. Hall's preaching was not eminently useful, notwithstanding those qualities of it which tended to prevent its being so in full proportion to the mighty force of mind which it displayed. Its be-

neficial effect is testified by the experience of a multitude of persons, of various orders of character. Intelligent, cultivated, and inquiring young persons, some of them favourably inclined to religion, but repelled by the uncouth phraseology, and the meanness and trite commonplace illustration, in which they had unfortunately seen it presented; some of them under temptations to scepticism and others to a rejection of some essential principle of christianity, were attracted and arrested by a lucid and convincing exhibition of divine truth. Men of literature and talents, and men of the world who were not utterly abandoned to impiety and profligacy, beheld religion set forth with a vigour and a lustre, and with an earnest sincerity infinitely foreign to all mere *professional* display, which once more showed religion worthy to command, and fitted to elevate the most powerful minds; which augmented the zeal of the faithful among those superior spirits, and sometimes constrained the others to say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian." Men of sectarian spirit were cheated of a portion of their bigotry, or forced into a consciousness that they ought to be ashamed of it. And, as a good of a more diffusive kind, numbers of people of the common order were held under a habitual impression of the importance of religion; and the enumeration would, I believe, be very considerable, if it could be made, of individuals indebted to his ministry for those effectual convictions which have resulted in their devotement to God, and their happiness in life and death.

It is very possible, that the latter part of these observations may be deemed erroneous or exaggerated by some persons, on a mere general presumption that, in such preeminent excellence, so universally acknowledged, there *could* not be any considerable defects. But at all events, and whatever the just exception may be to an unqualified eulogy, it is exactly by those whose discernment the least permitted them to be undiscriminating in their admiration, that the deepest regret is felt for the departure of that great and enlightened spirit. The crude admiration which can make no distinctions, never renders jus-

tice to what is really great. The colossal form is seen through a mist, dilated perhaps, but obscured and undefined, instead of standing forth conspicuous in its massive solidity and determinate lineaments and dimensions. The less confused apprehension of the object verifies its magnitude while perceiving its clear line of circumscription. The persons who could see where Mr. Hall's rare excellence had a limit short of the ideal perfection of a preacher, would, by the same judgement, form the justest and the highest estimate of the offerings which, in his person, reason and genius consecrated to religion—of the force of evidence with which he maintained its doctrines, of the solemn energy with which he urged its obligations, and of the sublimity with which he displayed its relations and prospects.

By those persons, the loss is reflected on with a sentiment peculiar to the event, never experienced before, nor to be expected in any future instance. The removal of any worthy minister, while in full possession and activity of his faculties, is a mournful occurrence; but there is the consideration that many such remain, and that perhaps an equal may follow where the esteemed instructor is withdrawn. But the feeling in the present instance is of a loss altogether irreparable. The cultivated portion of the hearers have a sense of privation partaking of desolateness. An animating influence that pervaded, and enlarged, and raised their minds, is extinct. While ready to give due honour to all valuable preachers, and knowing that the lights of religious instruction will still shine with useful lustre, and new ones continually rise, they involuntarily and pensively turn to look at the last fading colours in the distance where the greater luminary is set.

LETTER

TO

THE COMMITTEE OF

THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

To the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, convened in London on the 15th instant.

Bristol, March 12, 1827.

Gentlemen,

It is with much diffidence that I presume to address you on the present occasion, nor am I certain whether I am perfectly in order in so doing; but conceiving this to be a crisis in the mission, and not being able to be present at the meeting, I could not satisfy myself without communicating the result of my reflections on the important business which has called you together.

Dr. Marshman, it seems, as the representative of the brethren at Serampore, has instituted a demand of one-sixth of all the money collected or subscribed towards the society, to be paid annually in aid of the missionary operations going on there. It must strike every one as strange, that this demand should almost immediately follow a preceding one which was acceded to, which he then professed to consider as perfectly satisfactory, and as putting a final termination to all dispute or discussion on the subject of pecuniary claims—that, notwithstanding this, he should now bring forward a fresh requisition of one-sixth of the same amount, ac-

companied, as I am informed, by an intimation, that it is possible this may not be his ultimatum. This proceeding has all the appearance of a tentative process, designed to ascertain how far our anxiety to avoid a breach will prompt us to submit to his encroachments. What security have we against future requisitions if we yield to the present? What reason to suppose our ready compliance in this instance will not encourage him to embrace an early opportunity of making further demands? It has all the appearance of the commencement of a series of unfounded pretensions and endless exactions.

That a set of men, in the character of missionaries, after disclaiming the authority of the society which sent them out, and asserting an entire independence—after claiming an absolute control (whether rightfully or not) over a large property which that society has always considered as its own, should demand an annual payment from those from whom they had severed themselves, and thus attempt to make their constituents their tributaries, is a proceeding scarcely paralleled in the history of human affairs.

I am utterly at a loss to understand on what principles the Serampore brethren, in the position in which they have placed themselves, have any claim whatever on the funds of the society whose authority they have renounced, after appropriating to themselves the management of an extensive revenue, in the disposal of which they will not brook the smallest interference or control. Without reverting to former grounds of controversy, it will surely be admitted that the independence we have, for the sake of peace, conceded to them, is reciprocal—that our right to it is not less than theirs, and that we are consequently at liberty to dispose of our income in the way which we conceive most conducive to the purposes of our institution.

It may be very proper, under certain circumstances, for us to aid the brethren at Serampore by occasional donations, regulated by the state of our funds and the attention necessary to other objects; but this is essen-

tially different from absolutely engaging to pay an annual sum, which would, in my humble opinion, be equally inconsistent with the interests and the honour of this society. As our brethren of Serampore have chiefly exerted themselves in translations, and are confessedly in possession of great pecuniary resources, there seems no imperious necessity for regularly diverting those funds to their aid, which are unequal to the demand which Bengal alone would create, were our mission (a most desirable event) concentrated within that province. Calcutta, to say nothing of other stations, cries aloud for more labourers, but cries in vain.

It has been said that we are indebted for our success to the celebrity attached to the names of Carey, Marshman, and Ward; and that but for the unbounded confidence of the religious public in these men, our funds would never have been realized. Supposing this to be the case, to take advantage of such a circumstance in order to bring the society into subjection, would not be to make a very generous use of their influence. But I believe it is a mistake; it is my firm conviction that the Baptist mission, like other kindred institutions, rests on the basis of its own merits, and that it will not fail to secure the confidence of the public, in proportion to the purity of its motives, the wisdom of its councils, and the utility of its objects. If it cannot sustain the ordeal of public opinion on these principles, let it sink, rather than owe its support to the illusion of a name.

To contemplate the possibility of being compelled to an open rupture with our brethren of Serampore is unquestionably painful; it is their knowledge alone of our extreme reluctance to hazard that consequence which emboldens them to advance these exorbitant claims. If we can avoid it by a consistent and dignified mode of procedure, let it be avoided; but if peace can only be purchased by an ignominious surrender of our rights as a society,—by a tame submission to unreasonable demands,—and by subjecting it to a sort of feudal dependence, in all time to come, on persons we know not whom, whose character we cannot ascertain, and whose

actions we cannot control,—the purchase is, in my humble opinion, too dear. The treatment of the Serampore brethren has not been such that we need shrink from its most ample exposure to the public; nor have we any other censure to fear on that head, except it be for lavishing upon them a too overweening confidence. We have no such secrets to conceal, that it should cost us a large annual payment to secure their suppression.

Of the three brethren with whom we were lately in treaty, one is already gone into eternity, and the remaining two are advancing to that period of life which ought to make us pause ere we enter into engagements, which will give to persons of whom we know little or nothing a permanent right of interference with our funds.

The crisis is most solemn; and a hasty compliance with the present requisition may, when it is too late, make matter for bitter and unavailing repentance.—That you may be indulged on this, and on every other occasion, with "the wisdom which is from above," is the sincere prayer of,

Gentlemen,
Your obedient humble servant,
ROBERT HALL.

NOTE.

SERAMPORE MISSIONARIES.

In this collection of Mr. Hall's Works, every thing is inserted that was published with his sanction, and that is known to have been written by him, with the exception of a single letter which he many years ago engaged to suppress. But on inserting the letter in reference to the Serampore Missionaries (Vol. IV. p. 415.),* I inadvertently omitted to mention, that it received a place in virtue of the general rule thus adopted, and without asking the concurrence of

* The references in this and the following article are to the 8vo. edition of Mr. Hall's Works.

Mr. Foster. I therefore think it right to insert a letter which Mr. Foster has addressed to me in consequence of that omission. The controversy between the London Committee and the Serampore Missionaries I have always deeply deplored; yet I have an entire persuasion that the Committee did every thing in *their* power to avoid it, and abstained from making it public until they were compelled to do so by a feeling of duty to the Society with the management of whose concerns they are entrusted.

Olinthus Gregory.

TO DR. GREGORY.

My Dear Sir,

I observe you have admitted into the fourth volume of Mr. Hall's Works, very possibly without having had time, amidst your various and important engagements, for a deliberate consideration, a letter written by Mr. Hall to the "Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society," in March, 1827, on the occasion of a request from the Serampore Missionaries, for a certain annual grant of money from that Society. As that letter is calculated to injure the character of those Missionaries in the estimation of the readers of Mr. Hall's Works in times to come, allow me to submit to you whether it be not a claim of justice that you should give a place, in the concluding volume, to an observation or two which I have to offer.

Some of the points alluded to with implied censure in that letter, (those respecting the constitutional terms or the relation which had subsisted between the Society and those Missionaries) will be matters of small account in the view of the future generation of readers. But the main purport and effect of that letter must be, in the apprehension of those readers, to fix a dishonourable imputation on personal character. It is charged upon the Serampore fraternity (as well collectively as in their representative, Dr. Marshman) that they were rapacious of money; that they were apparently practising to see how much of it they could extort, on the strength of their reputation, as presumed by them to be of essential importance to that of the Society; that they were already exceeding the utmost pardonable advance of encroachment; that they were likely to be progressive and insatiable in their exactions; and that their possession, at the very same time, of "an extensive revenue," "large pecuniary resources," rendering needless to them the assist-

ance applied for, stamped a peculiar character of arrogance on that attempt at exaction.

Suppose a reader at some distant time to form his judgement exclusively on this representation, as an authentic and sufficient evidence; and what can he think of those men, but that they must have been, to say no more, some of the most unreasonable of mankind?—that though they did perform things which remain memorable in religious history, they were not worthy of their high vocation, for that the merit of their performances was spoiled by a grasping selfishness and an exorbitant arrogance? This supposition, that the document in question may have on the judgement of readers an effect inimical to the memory of those original Missionaries, long after they are dead, is authorized by the probability that Mr. Hall's writings will retain a place in public attention and favour, long after the occasional productions of the present time, in explanation and defence of the conduct of those Missionaries, shall have gone out of knowledge.

Now, my dear Sir, let me appeal to your sense of justice whether it be right, that this unqualified invective, written for a temporary purpose, without probably the least thought of publication, and written, as I shall prove to you, under extreme error, should be perpetuated in a standard work, as a stigma on the character of those men, without the admission also into the same work, for equal permanence, of a brief notice adapted to correct the wrong. The wrong is no less than this—that the charge, such as I have described it in plain conformity to the document, is made on men who, having prosecuted a course of indefatigable exertions in the Christian cause, one of them for more than a quarter of a century, and another a much longer time, during more than twenty years of which they have not received or asked any share of the Society's income—having supported themselves, and performed their great literary, and their other missionary operations gratuitously—having, besides this, expended in the Christian service, during a long period, several thousand pounds a-year from resources created by their own diligence—and having also contributed very largely by their high reputation to the public credit and success of the Society itself—could not, after all this, conceive it to be an unreasonable "exaction," or "extortion," to request the aid of a sixth part of the Society's annual income, when at last their own had become greatly diminished, chiefly in consequence of

the establishment of other printing offices and schools in the neighbouring city.

But the case being so, it may be asked, with some surprise, how Mr. Hall could be betrayed to write such a letter. I can assign what must have been the chief cause. He believed he had reason to place implicit confidence in testimony, which assured him, that the Serampore Missionaries were at that very time in the possession of superabundant wealth; and he happened not to be in communication with informants, who could have proved to him that the contrary was the fact, to the painful extreme. It is from my own immediate knowledge that I make this statement. In a long conversation, just about the time that the letter to the Committee was written, he affirmed to me and several other friends, on the authority of testimony which he assigned, and held to be unquestionable, that these Missionaries had the command of what might truly be called (speaking in relative proportion to such a concern) an *immense* capital and income. I could give you the sums in figures, but forbear, purely in consideration of their extravagance. Suffice it to say, that the amount was most palpably and enormously beyond any alleged or conceivable necessities of such an establishment. Entirely confident in this belief, he thought, of course, that an application to the Society for aid was a most unreasonable claim; whereas, the fact was, as Dr. Marshman represented, and as Dr. Carey soon after confirmed, that it was made from the pressure of pecuniary difficulty, which was forcing the brethren at Serampore to the alternative of either obtaining assistance in this country, or abandoning several of their missionary stations. Had Mr. Hall been aware of the real state of the case, he would not have written a single sentence of that letter. It was unfortunate that he should have been so credulous to delusive representations.

Again appealing to your justice for the insertion of this note of explanation somewhere in the concluding volume,

I remain,

My dear Sir,

Yours, with the greatest regard,

J. FOSTER.

LETTERS.

LETTERS.

I.

TO THE BAPTIST CHURCH, BROADMEAD, BRISTOL.

Old Aberdeen, King's College,
Dec. 4, 1783.*

Dear and honoured Brethren,

I DULY received your affectionate letter, in which you expressed your desire of engaging my labours as an assistant minister. Your request does me honour, and confers upon me an obligation which no efforts of mine can fully discharge. Yet, young and inexperienced as I am, I tremble to think of engaging in so arduous a work, especially in a situation where all my incapacity will be doubly felt. I cannot but think a few years would be necessary to enable me to gratify the lowest expectations. To plunge into the midst of life at so tender an age, with so little experience and so small a stock of knowledge, almost terrifies me. Your candid judgement of my past services I acknowledge with a mixture of pleasure and surprise,—pleased to attain the approbation of the wise and good, and surprised I in any measure have attained it; which I can attribute to nothing but the tenderness and forbearance which have ever strongly marked your conduct.

A retired and private sphere would indeed be more upon a level with my abilities, and congenial to my temper; yet I would willingly sacrifice my private inclinations to more important views, and lose sight of myself, if I could benefit others. My reluctance, therefore, to obey your call, arises merely from a feeling

* Mr. Hall was at this time in his twentieth year.

of my weakness, and my secret fear lest you should hereafter have occasion to repent it. If you could have dispensed with my labours till the final close of my studies, I might then have hoped to have been more able to serve you; but if not, I submit. Let me but crave your prayers, that as my day, so my strength may be. Your welfare, honoured brethren, will ever lie near my heart: numberless reflections concur with a thousand tender recollections of past kindness to keep it there. But these are not my only inducements to embrace your proposals. It is an additional pleasure to me, when I reflect with whom I have the honour to be connected,—with one whom I most sincerely reverence, and to whom I am bound by every tie of affection and gratitude.* I hope I undertake this work in the fear of God, and look forward to that awful day when all these solemn transactions shall be reviewed, and every secret motive that entered into them will be brought to light. Wishing you, dear brethren, all prosperity, and that you may be "stedfast in that day,"

I subscribe myself yours, &c.

Robert Hall, Jun.

II.

TO THE REV. ISAIAH BIRT, PLYMOUTH.

Cambridge, Feb. 5, 1791.

Dear Sir,

I have frequently thought it is something remarkable, that you and I have had an intimate acquaintance for many years, and yet that we have scarcely exchanged a letter. Our frequent occasional interviews have formerly rendered this less necessary; but now that I shall probably be settled in a distant situation, and an opportunity of seeing each other may seldom occur, I cannot satisfy myself without requesting a stated correspondence. You will excuse my earnestness to solicit this, when you recollect that it is the effect of that fixed and well-founded

* Dr. Caleb Evans.

esteem I always did and always shall bear you. I will communicate to you, not the incidents of the day or the week, for my time at present slides away without incident, but the inward sentiments of my heart, and the trifles, serious or gay, that spring up there; happy if I can imagine for a moment I am conversing with you as we did in the days of yore, when, without care or sorrow, we sauntered in the fields near Bristol. Ah, happy days, never to return again! I am at present at Cambridge, in the element of peace at least, if not of happiness; and indeed, after the tumults of strife and din of parties, quiet itself seems happiness.

* * * * * *

Perhaps you may wish to be informed of some particulars relating to my present situation. It is, on the whole, happy. The people seem very harmonious, and much united to me. I could wish their sentiments were more orthodox, though the far greater part of them are sufficiently so. They who are not, seem very ready to hear cool, dispassionate reasoning, on the other side of the question. I have tried their pulse several times since I have been here. On the first sabbath of my arrival, I preached in the morning on Heb. ix. 13.—" How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God," &c.—an entirely controversial sermon in defence of the atonement. I had the satisfaction of finding few, very few, who did not acknowledge the justice of my reflections, and that they who were not convinced were not displeased. I should be happy if Providence should make me an humble instrument of withstanding the dangerous errors that are in vogue, and of preventing or lessening their growth at least, in the place where Providence may appoint my lot. I intend very soon to preach a sermon professedly on the divinity of Jesus Christ. This and the atonement, I am more and more convinced, lie at the foundation of the true system of vital religion; nor will sinners ever be converted to God by a ministry that excludes them. I hope I am not censorious; but I am persuaded that much of the liberality so much talked of

is rather a fashionable cant than any genuine candour of heart. At present I am a boarder; and shall continue so, in case I should stay here, for some time. I have free access to all the libraries gratis, by means of acquaintance in the University.

Pray write soon, very soon.

I am yours affectionately,

ROBERT HALL.

III.

ACCEPTING THE PASTORAL CHARGE OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT CAMBRIDGE.

To the Church lately under the pastoral care of Mr. Robinson:

Dear Brethren,

I am truly sensible of the honour you have done me, in inviting me to the pastoral office amongst you. I am convinced of my inability adequately to discharge its arduous duties; but, relying on your candour, and the hopes of superior assistance, I will attempt it to the best of my power, and beg an interest in your prayers, that my endeavours for your spiritual improvement may be succeeded, and that I may be able to commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

I remain,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.

Cambridge, July 23, 1791.

IV.

TO MISS WILKINS,

AFTERWARDS MRS. FYSH, OF CAMBERWELL.

Dear Madam,

I hope you will excuse the liberty that friendship dictates, of sending you these lines. The interest you possess in the affections of your friends, and their solicitude

for your happiness, render it impossible they should hear of your affliction, without deeply sympathizing with you. Among these I beg leave to have the honour of classing myself; and though least, not last. I was the other day at Mr. W——'s, and was informed you still continued extremely indisposed. I immediately determined to take the liberty of writing, to express my esteem and sympathy. I upbraid myself heavily, for not having snatched an opportunity of seeing you before I left Bristol; and had I foreseen the prolongation of your illness, I certainly would not have omitted it. From me, who have suffered so much, it would be unpardonable, if distress of every kind did not extort a tear; much more, when the sufferer is a friend, whose virtues and talents I respect and admire. This world is, indeed, a scene of suffering; and it ought, in some measure, to reconcile us to our lot, that, in feeling distress, we strike chords in unison with the whole universe. Adversity is capricious in its times and seasons; but its visitations, sooner or later, never fail. In some, it overwhelms the first hopes of life, so that they no sooner begin to taste felicity in prospect, than they are crossed with hopeless disappointment: others it permits to advance farther, waits till they spread the foundations of happiness deep and wide, that, just when they have nearly finished the superstructure, it may overwhelm them with a more extensive desolation. Some are racked with pains and agonies of body; and others are preys to disappointed passions and blasted hopes, wasted with devouring regrets, and sick at heart with melancholy retrospects; wishing in vain they could arrest the wings of time, and put the current of life back. Of all these classes, every individual thinks *his* misfortunes the greatest. For the same reason, we are never at a loss to hear our own voice, be it ever so slender: the cry of a pierced heart sounds shrill in the solitary ear of the sufferer. Since we cannot essentially meliorate, let us endeavour to allay, our anguish by moderating our expectations. I am persuaded, all we can reasonably hope for, on this side the grave, is tranquillity; not the insensibility of a statue, but the placidity of a well-in-

formed mind, relying on the promises and the cheering prospects of immortality. But why do I thus address one who is as well acquainted with every subject of Christian consolation as I can pretend to [be]? I am persuaded you will edify your friends as much by your patience in affliction, as you have enlivened them in better days by the exercise of your sprightlier powers. Virtue is always consistent; and, guided by its dictates, you will never fail to be an example. This scene of suffering will not always last; nor do we suffer "as those without hope." It is, indeed, the night of nature, a short night, and not utterly dark: it will soon pass away, and be succeeded by a bright and endless day. Æneas comforts his companions in the midst of distress, by telling them that the retrospect of their sufferings will hereafter be delightful to them. Whether we shall, in this world, be indulged with such a satisfaction, I know not; but surely it will be a source of the most pleasing reflection in a happier world.

Of Bishop Leighton, whose sermons I wish you to read, Bishop Burnet declares, that during a strict intimacy of many years, he never saw him, for one moment, in any other temper than that in which he should wish to live and die: and if any human composition could form such a character, it must be his own. Full of the richest imagery, and breathing a spirit of the most sublime and unaffected devotion, the reading him is a truce to all human cares and human passions; and I can compare it to nothing but the beautiful representation in the twenty-third Psalm—it is like "lying down in green pastures, and by the side of still waters."

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

Cambridge, 1791.

V.

TO MRS. FYSH, OF CAMBERWELL,

ON THE DEATH OF HER SISTER MRS. PARSONS.

Cambridge, August 14, 1796.

My dear Friend,

Permit me to express the deep interest I take in your distress, from the loss of the best of friends, and the best of sisters, in the loss of dear Mrs. Parsons. How many losses are united! She has left a husband to lament the most lovely of wives; you, the most endeared of sisters; the church of Christ, one of its brightest ornaments; and the world, one of its fairest examples: all, all have fallen a victim in this most excellent woman. I have not met with any event, for many years, that has affected me at all equally. Had I been permitted to draw aside the mysterious veil that hides futurity; could I have had any presentiments I saw her at —— for the last time, how solemn would have been the moments, how awfully interesting my emotions! I pity her husband—I pity her sisters; this is a stroke which must be severely felt in the tenderest manner. I know the heart, when recently wounded, must be indulged in the luxury of grief; and, if there ever was an occasion which could justify the most poignant regret, it is the present, in which we lament the loss of so much excellence. But I hope you will, by degrees, inure your imagination to dwell less on your loss, and more on her happiness. What a glorious display of the power of christianity! what a triumphant departure! O, that I may die the death of Mrs. Parsons, and that my last end may be like hers! Her life was an ornament to christianity—a pattern to her sex. Immortality dawned on her enraptured mind, even before it quitted its earthly abode; and her pure and elevated soul made an easy transit to the society of the blessed. Her career was short, but illustrious; and she crowded into her little sphere the virtues of a long life. Short as her continuance was upon earth, she was permitted to exemplify the duties of every character, and to imprint, in indelible [traces], on the memories of all who were

honoured with her acquaintance, the perfections of a friend, a sister, a mother, and a wife. It is true she has slept the sleep of death; but she sleeps in Jesus: she has gone before you into the holy of holies: she will meet you at the great rendezvous of being, the assembly of the just; and, in the mean time, instead of being an object of *your* pity, probably looks down upon *you* with ineffable tenderness and compassion. I have seen, besides your letter, one from Mrs. Gutteridge; and I must say, I never heard, on the whole, of so calm, so triumphant a death: it seemed as if she had been permitted to step into heaven before her final departure, that she might thence address herself to her friends with more serenity, dignity, and effect.

What, my dear friend, besides Christianity, can thus scatter the horrors of the soul? What else could enable a young lady in the bloom of life, with a prosperous fortune, beloved by a husband, endeared to her friends, and esteemed by the whole world, to triumph in the thoughts of dissolution? Divine christianity! it is thine only to comfort and support the languishing and dying.

I hope all Mrs. Parsons' numerous acquaintance will be properly impressed with this singular dispensation of Providence. Let them ask themselves whether the loose sceptical principles of the age are at all adapted to such a scene; whether they have any thing in them that will enable them to exert the calm heroism displayed in the most trying moment by this departed excellence. Let me hope some one, at least, will be impressed by this wonderful example of the power of religion.

Death has made frequent visits to your family; the youngest is now snatched away. Mr. Beddome, poor Richard Beddome, and now Mrs. Parsons; in how short a time they have followed each other!

I find, your dear deceased sister expressed her anxiety at the progress of deism with her last breath. To a serious mind it affords a most melancholy prospect; but, you must observe, it does not seize the mind at once: it advances by the progressive stages of socinianism and dissipation. Men first lose their relish for what is *vital*

and distinguishing in christianity, before they dispute its evidences, or renounce its authority. Lax notions of the person of Christ, a forgetfulness of his mediation, place the mind in a deistical state, and prepare it for the most licentious opinions.

The consolations of your dear deceased sister did not result from a general belief of the doctrine of immortality, in which the socinians place the whole of revelation; but in specific views of Christ as a Saviour, and the prospect of being for ever with him. My dear friend, let us hold fast *this kind of christianity*, without wavering, as the antidote of death.

Excuse this freedom, which results not, from any suspicion of your own defection, but from a friendly concern for some for whom we both retain the sincerest regards. My paper forbids me to add more.

Present my most affectionate respects to Mr. Fysh, and accept the same yourself, from

Your affectionate and sympathizing Friend,
Robert Hall.

VI.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS, HAVERFORDWEST.

Cambridge, June 7, 1799.

My Dear Friend,

How could you suspect for a moment that I wished to dissolve my friendship with you, a friendship which I have always esteemed a distinguished honour and happiness? No, my dear friend. My long silence is indeed inexcusable; but impute it to any cause, and you will do me more justice than by suspecting my diminution of regard. My aversion to letter-writing you are well acquainted with. I have formed many resolutions to surmount it: but, in the moment of trial, am baffled. I sincerely sympathize with you in the loss of your child; but, my dear friend, do not suffer your spirits to sink. Remember the tenure on which all human enjoyments are held, the wisdom and sovereignty of their great

Author, and the gracious promise afforded to true christians, that "all things shall work together for good to them that love him." Remember the many blessings with which a kind Providence still indulges you. Ought you not to rejoice that your affectionate companion in life is spared; and that, though your child is snatched from your embraces, he has escaped from a world of sin and sorrow? The stamp of immortality is placed on his happiness, and he is encircled by the arms of a compassionate Redeemer. Had he been permitted to live, and you had witnessed the loss of his virtue, you might have been [reserved] to suffer still severer pangs. A most excellent couple in our congregation are now melancholy spectators of a son dying, at nineteen years of age, by inches, a victim to his vices. They have frequently regretted he did not die several years since, when his life was nearly despaired of, in a severe fever. "Who knoweth what is good for a man all the days of this his vain life, which he spends as a shadow?"

Many interesting scenes have occurred since our interview. About six months ago, I was attacked by a violent fever; and, in my own apprehensions, for about two days was on the borders of eternity. I never before felt my mind so calm and happy. Filled with the most overwhelming sense of my own unworthiness, my mind was supported merely by a faith in Christ crucified. I would not for the world have parted with that text, "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." I never before saw such a beauty and grandeur in the way of salvation by the death of Christ, as on that occasion. I am fully persuaded the evangelical doctrines alone are able to support the mind in the near views of death and judgement. May you and I be more and more grounded in a conviction of their truth, and acquainted with their power! It is to these doctrines the revelation of Christ is chiefly indebted for its efficacy in the hearts and lives of men.

* * * * * *

VII.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS.

Cambridge, Feb. 14, 1801.

My dear Friend,

I have long purposed to write to you, and should have done so, but from that unhappy reluctance to writing which is almost a part of my nature. I hope you will do me the justice to believe it did not arise from any abatement of love and esteem. But a truce to apologies.

I am heartily glad to find you have preached at Clapham, where I hope you will find much to comfort you in the opportunity of doing good; for we can be truly happy but in proportion as we are the instruments of promoting the happiness of others. From what little I have heard of the people, you will meet kind and respectful treatment; but there will be much to damp your zeal, against which, I doubt not, you will be upon your guard. You will have pleasing society; and the vicinity to London has many advantages. May we, my dear friend, "work while it is to-day, for the hour is shortly coming when we can work no longer."

* * * * * *

Mr. Hill, by whom you sent your letter, just called in the morning, but could not make any stay. He seemed an agreeable, sensible man. If you should see Mr. Rowland Hill, present my christian respects to him, though unknown, and assure him it would give me uncommon pleasure to see and hear him at Cambridge, and that I shall think myself much honoured by hearing him preach in my pulpit. I went into the vestry and spoke to him, about two years ago, in Surrey Chapel; but he did not recollect me, and I felt a reluctanee to make so free as to mention my name, and therefore only mentioned you as a common friend and retired. He is a man for whom I ever entertained a very high esteem. Whatever a misjudging world may say, such men as these will "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever." May my soul, though at a humble distance, be admitted among them! I have just been reading with very great pleasure, and I hope some profit, Orton and

Stonhouse's Letters to Stedman. They contain most excellent prudential, moral and religious instruction; devout, liberal, rational, yet fervent piety, of the stamp of Doddridge, who is now my prime favourite among divines. If you have not seen them, they will richly repay your perusal. Dr. Stonhouse and Miss More both lived at Bristol at the time I resided there; and yet such was my extreme folly, I never took any means of becoming acquainted with either of them, which might very easily have been done. "Surely I have been more brutish than any man." What opportunities of knowledge and improvement have I lost, and have now reached the meridian of life, and am but a child! I may adopt, with more propriety than any man that ever lived, the prayer —"Remember not the sins of my youth."

* * * * * *

What strange news is this of Mr. Pitt's leaving the ministry? I am glad of it, though I suppose the men that succeed will persist in the same measures. But a schism in the cabinet bodes ill for the permanence of the party; so that I hope the present change is only a prelude to one more important. The present ministry can surely never be permanent. We must have peace, or we are inevitably and speedily ruined. But I hate politics, and have not read a paper above twice these nine months; so that you must not suppose I am very profound on these subjects.

You have heard, no doubt, of the death of poor Mr. ——, of ——. He departed this life, Monday se'nnight, at ——. He was at dinner at Mr. ——'s, and was taken with a second apoplectic fit betwixt the two courses, and expired in about two hours. He never spake, except the moment after he was seized; when, in answer to Mrs. ——'s inquiry, he said he was poorly. Poor man! he had very little happiness in life, and his last years were very *un*happy. No spirits, no exertion, no usefulness! I sometimes think it is a mercy I was not a "gentleman parson;" for, with my natural indolence, the temptations of that character would have completed my ruin. "Let us work, my dear friend, while it is called to-day."

* * * * * *

Pray, have you heard any more about the design of the government to suppress village preaching and Sunday-schools? Our friends at Clapham were very apprehensive of it some time since, but we hear little of it in the country. Mr. Simeon informed me lately, he had little doubt something of the sort would be attempted. He gave some intimation of the same kind in a sermon he preached to his own people. Pray inform me of all you have heard about it, for it is an affair which lies with considerable weight on my mind. If there should be any thing done, we shall see dismal times. Do you know whether any thing has been written on the subject? Mr. Simeon and I are upon very friendly terms. I lately dined with him at his own rooms, and have repeatedly met him in company, in which the conversation has been very agreeable. The reconciliation was effected principally by the intervention of Mr. Owen, of Fulham, and of Alderman Ind. A paper was drawn up, and signed by each party. We are upon very comfortable terms with the church-people at present; never was less party spirit at Cambridge. I wish I could see more good done; but yet I must not complain. Our congregation is very flourishing, and things wear an agreeable aspect. But my paper admonishes me to close. Pray write to me very soon, if not immediately, and let us see you at Cambridge as early as possible. Remember me respectfully to Mr. Thompson, Miss Wilkinson, Mr. Beddome, &c. I am, dear Sir,

Yours constantly,

Robert Hall.

VIII.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS.

Cambridge, May 26, 1801.

My dear Friend,

I thank you for your very kind letter, and for your invitation to pay you an early visit at Clapham. You

know, and every one who knows me knows, there is no friend living whom I should be so glad to see as yourself, but am afraid it will not be in my power to gratify this inclination at present. I am just going to see my old friend Kinghorn, at Norwich, where I shall be absent one, possibly two, sabbaths. In the fall of the year I am engaged to visit Bristol, and to go as far as Plymouth; so that I am afraid it will not be in my power to pay my London and Clapham friends a visit this summer. I shall fully expect, however, to see you at Cambridge some time in the summer. It is long since you were here; and we are anxiously desirous of seeing you, with Mrs. Phillips, to whom I beg to be affectionately remembered. It gives me extreme pleasure to hear of your great acceptance at Clapham. Miss Wilkinson * spoke in raptures of you to Mrs. Gutteridge. The distinguished respect the people have shown you, does them much more honour than it can do you. You are intimate, I find, with Mr. Beddome's family. They are, indeed, a lovely family, truly friendly, liberal, and intelligent: there is no house where I spend my time more agreeably, in London or the environs. The parcel you sent me consists of a very polite letter from Mr. Roberts, enclosing a copy of verses, elegant, and truly and strictly poetical, that is replete with *fiction*, containing praises which my heart compels me to disclaim with a sigh! O my friend, what an infinity of time I have lost, and how ardently do I long to do something which shall convince the world I have not lived in vain! My wishes, in this respect, will, it is to be feared, never be fulfilled. Tranquillity is not my lot. The prey, in early life, of passion and calamity, I am now perfectly devoured with an impatience to redeem time, and to be of some lasting benefit to the world, at least to the church. But this *inter nos*.

* This excellent lady, for more than half a century, devoted a portion of her income to the publication, in a *cheap* form, of judicious and valuable selections from the works of *Baxter*, *Howe*, *Allein*, *Janeway*, *Watts*, &c. she was also Editor of the "Pocket Prayer Book," the "Sunday School Library," "Pocket Sermons," and other useful books; of which many thousand copies were sold, and as many distributed gratuitously. They still obtain, as they deserve, a wide circulation.—Ed.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

You wish me to answer Bishop Horsley. You have seen, probably, Rowland Hill's sermon. I should be little disposed to *answer* Horsley, or any individual. Were any thing to be done, it should, in my opinion, enter into the whole matter, containing an ample defence of the liberty of worship, and of the specific efforts of methodists and dissenters, in instructing and evangelizing mankind.* I, some time since, put down some thoughts on this subject; but whether I shall proceed will depend on the conduct of the government; as a laboured defence would be, probably, impolitic, without a projected attack. Pray come soon to see us. My respects to Mr. Thompson, Miss Wilkinson, Beddomes, Petries, and other friends, as if named.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours constantly and affectionately,
ROBERT HALL.

IX.

TO MRS. TUCKER, PLYMOUTH DOCK.

Cambridge, Feb. 18, 1802.

Dear Madam,

I know not what apology to make, for having so long neglected to fulfil my part of the mutual promise of correspondence. Impute it to any thing rather than indifference; for I can assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that your kindness to me, while I had the happiness of being under your roof, left an impression on my mind of gratitude and esteem which no time can efface. It is doing no sort of justice to my feelings, to say that it exceeded any thing of the kind I ever experienced in my life; and heightens the regret I feel at the probability of few opportunities of personal intercourse with a friend, who has so great a claim to my regard, and in whose welfare I shall always feel myself so deeply interested. When I look back on my past

* See the Fragments on Toleration, &c. in Vol. III.—ED.

days, (alas! why should I ever look back,) the few I spent at Plymouth Dock appear like a bright spot in a dreary prospect. Though my friends at Bristol were disposed to be displeased at my staying so long in Devonshire, I shall never repent of it since it afforded me an opportunity of renewing and cementing a virtuous friendship—the only kind of friendship that will flourish to eternal ages. Yes, Madam, I hope to renew with you the remembrance of my visit to Dock, and of your kindness, before the throne, where distance will no more interrupt the intercourse of kindred minds. What a happiness to reflect, though separated here, we are advancing every step nearer to the place of meeting; and in the mean time, we are mingling our addresses at the same mercy-seat, imbibing pleasure at the same spring, and deposing our anxieties in the same compassionate bosom! There is a divine reality in the communion of saints, which I pray we may more and more experience.

I have just been reading Dr. Whitehead's Life of Mr. Wesley: it has given me a much more enlarged idea of the virtues and labours of that extraordinary man than I ever had before. I would not incur the guilt of that virulent abuse which Toplady cast upon him, for points merely speculative and of very little importance, for ten thousand worlds. When will the Christian world cease disputing about religion, and begin to enter into its spirit, and practise its precepts? I am attempting to write a vindication of village preaching and of Sunday schools, but when it will be out I do not know; I endeavour to do a little at it every day, but am a slow hand.

From several quarters I am given to understand my preaching at Plymouth and Dock gave general dissatisfaction. This intelligence gives me no particular concern, being conscious of my upright intentions; but if it arose, in any degree, from the practical complexion of my addresses, I am sorry, as it indicates a tincture of that antinomian spirit which threatens to deluge the church.

* * * * *

I am, dear Madam,

Your affectionate friend,

ROBERT HALL.

X.

TO MRS. TUCKER.

Shelford, Feb. 14, 1804.

Dear Madam,

In truth I had almost despaired of the honour of ever hearing from you any more; it was therefore no small gratification to me, to be indulged once more with a sight of your hand-writing. I sincerely sympathize with you, my amiable friend, in the heavy loss you have sustained, in being deprived of so excellent a father, who must have been endeared to you in no ordinary degree, not only by the ties of nature, but by the peculiar tenderness and affection he ever displayed through an intimate and almost uninterrupted intercourse of a long series of years. I know, by experience, the pang which the loss of an affectionate parent produces, though under circumstances which possibly might render the blow somewhat less severe than that which you sustain. For many years previous to the death of my most excellent father, my situation had permitted me but little opportunity of intercourse, which though it did not in the least impair my esteem or reverence, probably diminished that tenderness and vehemence of attachment, which virtuous children never fail to feel towards the deserving parents with whom they reside. Allowing, however, for this difference, I well know the desolating, the withering sensation, which pervades the heart on the loss of an affectionate father. We feel, with a conviction as instantaneous as lightning, that the loss is irreparable,—that the void can never be supplied, and that, however many amiable and excellent friends we may have left, there is none who *will so naturally care for our souls.* I can most easily conceive, therefore, and most tenderly sympathize with the sorrow which so great a blow must inflict on so tender a heart. The aids of reason and religion may inspire resignation; but nothing but the torrent of time will wear away the traces of sorrow, and leave in the heart a tender and not an afflicting remembrance. It is needless, to a mind so vigorous as yours,

to recall to your remembrance the many sources of gratitude which remain in the midst of your affliction, and the great alleviations which accompany it. You will reflect, I am persuaded, with gratitude, on the great number of years your dear father was spared to you; you will remember the moral impossibility of his continuing to enjoy, at so advanced [an age], many additional years of happiness on earth; and, what will afford you the truest consolation, you will follow him within the veil, and contemplate him resting from his labours, and sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. How infinitely indebted, my amiable friend, are we to that gospel which gives us everlasting consolation, and a good hope through grace! May he who alone has immediate access to the heart, calm every agitation, and solace every disquietude of your breast! My excellent friend will not, I am persuaded, abandon herself to immoderate sorrow. I trust, at least, you will be extremely upon your guard against indulging that luxury of grief, as it has been termed, which, however congenial to the extreme sensibility of your temper, would disqualify you alike for happiness and duty. Your domestic station will, happily for you, afford that occupation and diversion to your thoughts, which will have a powerful tendency to moderate the excesses of grief.

* * * * * *

I am, dear Madam,
Yours most sincerely and respectfully,
ROBERT HALL.

TO MR. HEWITT FYSH, CAMBERWELL,

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. FYSH.

Shelford, March 11, 1804.

My dear Friend,

I deeply sympathize with you in the great loss you have sustained by the decease of your most excellent

wife. It is a stroke which will be long felt by all her surviving friends; how much more by a person with whom she was so long and so happily united! There are many considerations, however, which must occur to your mind, in alleviation of your distress. The dear deceased had long been rendered incapable, by the severity of her affliction, of enjoying life; and a further extension of it would have been but a prolongation of woe. Much as her friends must regret her loss, to have been eagerly solicitous for her continuance here would have been a refined selfishness, rather than true friendship. She was spared for the kindest purposes; to exemplify the power of religion in producing a cheerful resignation to the will of God, through a long series of suffering, to a degree which I never saw equalled in any other instance. *There was the faith and patience of the saints.* Her graces were most severely tried, and surely never did any shine brighter. The most active and zealous services in religion could not have yielded more glory to God than the dignified composure, the unruffled tranquillity, and the unaltered sweetness, she maintained amidst her trials. O, my dear friend, let the image of her virtues be ever impressed on your heart, and ever improved as an incentive to that close walk with God which laid the foundation of all her excellence. To have had an opportunity of contemplating the influence of genuine religion so intimately, and under so interesting a form, is a privilege which falls to the lot of few, and is surely one of the most inestimable advantages we can possess. That she was spared to you so long; that her patience continued unexhausted amidst so severe a pressure; and, above all, that you have so well-grounded an assurance of her happiness, must fill you with a grateful sense of the divine goodness. This state is designed to be a mingled scene, in which joy and sorrow, serenity and storms, take their turns. A perpetuity of either would be unsuitable to us. An uninterrupted series of prosperity would fill us with worldly passions. An unbroken continuity of adversity would unfit us for exertion. *The spirit would fail before him, and the souls which he hath made.* Pain and pleasure, scenes of satisfaction and

sorrow, are admirably attempered with each other, so as to give us constant room for thankfulness, and yet to remind us that *this is not our rest.* Our dear and invaluable friend has entered into the world of perfect spirits, to which she made so near an approach during her continuance here. To a mind so refined, and exercised in the school of affliction, so resigned to the divine will, and so replete with devotion and benevolence, how easy and delightful was the transition! To her *to live was Christ*, *and to die was gain.* Let us improve this dispensation of Providence, by imitating her example; let us cherish her memory with reverential tenderness; and consider it as an additional call to all we have received before, to *seek the things that are above.* I confess the thought of so dear a friend having left this world makes an abatement of its value in my estimation, as I doubt not it will still more in yours. The thought of my journey to London gives me little or no pleasure: for I shall hear the accents of that voice which so naturally expressed the animation of benevolence—I shall behold that countenance which displayed so many amiable sentiments—no more. But can we wish her back? Can we wish to recall her from that blissful society which she has joined, and where she is singing a new song? No, my dear friend! you will not be so selfish. You will, I trust, aspire with greater ardour than ever after the heavenly world, and be daily imploring fresh supplies of that grace which will fit you for an everlasting union with our deceased friend. I hope her amiable nieces will profit by this expressive event. And as they have (blessed be God for it!) *begun to seek after Sion with their faces thitherward*, that they will walk forward with additional firmness and alacrity. I shall make little or no stay in London on my first journey; but, as I long to see you, will spend the 11th instant (that is, the evening preceding my engagement to preach,) at your house, if agreeable. I shall be glad to see Mr. Dore, but pray do not ask strangers.

I am
Your sympathizing friend,
Robert Hall.

XII.

TO DR. GREGORY.

ORIGIN AND OBJECT OF THE ECLECTIC REVIEW.

Foulmire (near Cambridge), Oct. 30, 1804.

My dear Friend,

You have probably heard of the project of a new Review, called the Eclectic Review, which is intended to counteract the irreligious bias which seems to attach to almost all literary journals. Whether a sufficient number of persons of real talents can be procured to give it permanent credit and support, appears to me very doubtful. Mr. Greatheed has written to request my assistance, and I intend occasionally to write in it. I have at the same time taken the liberty to mention Mr. Gregory, as a person admirably adapted to conduct the mathematical and astronomical department, if he can be persuaded. Mr. Greatheed has accordingly requested me to write to you on this subject, and to assure you that your assistance will be most welcome, and the terms your own. I really think a review of the kind proposed would be a public benefit; as the cause of piety and moderate orthodoxy stands no chance at present. Will you permit me to inform Mr. Greatheed, to whom it is left to treat with writers, that you are willing to contribute to it in the line of mathematics and natural philosophy?

* * * * * *
* * * * *

XIII.

TO WILLIAM HOLLICK, ESQ., OF WHITTLESFORD, NEAR CAMBRIDGE.

ON HIS OWN RECOVERY FROM A SEVERE MALADY.

Leicester, Feb. 26, 1805.

My dear Friend,

I thought it would be some satisfaction to you to hear that I continue, through the blessing of God, perfectly

well. My health, through divine mercy, was never better; nor can I be sufficiently thankful to that good Providence which has recovered me from the gates of death. Motives for gratitude crowd in upon me on every side; and the most I have to complain of is, that my heart is so little alive to their impression.

When, my dear Sir, we look back upon past life, what a series of evidences present themselves of a presiding and parental care! With what propriety may we adopt the language of David: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and with tender mercies!" I am more and more convinced, that nothing deserves to be called life that is not devoted to the service of God; and that piety is the only true wisdom. But, alas! how difficult it is to get these lessons deeply impressed on the heart, and wrought into the whole habit of the mind! I have not yet been at Arnsby, but shall go there in a day or two, and propose to spend about ten days there; and shall probably visit Cambridge in little more than a fortnight. My spirits are rather low, but my mind is composed, and in some measure resigned to the leading and conduct of Divine Providence. The narrow bounds of my experience have furnished me with such a conviction of the vanity of this world, and the illusion of its prospects, that I indulge no eager hopes. If God enables me to do some little good, and preserves me from great calamities, it will be enough, and infinitely more than I deserve; for I have been, in the most emphatic sense of the word, "an unprofitable servant."

* * * * * *

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours affectionately,
Robert Hall.

XIV.

TO DR. GREGORY.

ON THE CERTAINTY ATTENDING RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

Foulmire, Sept. 4, 1805.

My dear Friend,

Let me beg you will not impute my long silence to a diminution of esteem or affection. It arose simply from my being conscious of my utter inability to make any such reply to your letter as should be in the least degree satisfactory. The subject on which you have touched in your last is so unspeakably intricate, that the more I have reflected upon it the more I have seemed to feel myself lost and perplexed. Of all the problems proposed to the human understanding, the inquiry respecting the certainty of the objects of human knowledge seems the most difficult of solution. If the ideal theory of Locke be true, and there be no resemblance between the impressions made on the senses and the inherent qualities of external objects, we cannot be said to have any absolute knowledge of things without us. In things of an abstract nature, such as the relations of quantity, the consciousness of a distinct agreement and disagreement of our ideas lays a sufficient basis of science, though the objects themselves to which the science is referred be supposed to have no existence. It matters not whether there be a circle in the world, in regard to the certainty with which we accede to the propositions which explain its properties. It is entirely an affair of the *mind*—an arrangement of its internal conceptions. When we transfer our ideas to religion, they appear to attain as much certainty at least as satisfies us in the common affairs of life. We must at once abandon all reasoning, or admit the proofs of design in the works of nature; and design necessarily implies a designing agent. Thus the being of a God appears to rest on the firmest basis, though it may be impossible to determine, from the light of reason, *what* that being is. When we advance to revelation, the evidence of testimony is as clearly

applicable to the supernatural facts of scripture as to any other species of facts whatsoever; and we seem capable of knowing as much of God in his works and ways, as of any other subject. I concur with you entirely, that the *phenomena* of religion are perfectly on a level, in this respect, with any other phenomena; and cannot but think that there is a very exact analogy subsisting betwixt grace and force, together with other principles whose existence we are obliged to admit, though we know nothing of them but in their effects. We can never penetrate beyond effects; we can never contemplate causes in *themselves*, at least in our present dark and benighted condition; so that the sceptical tendency of metaphysical science ought to come in aid of our religious belief, by showing that religion labours under no other difficulties than those which envelope all the fundamental principles of knowledge. The profoundest metaphysician will, in my opinion, *(cæteris paribus,)* be always the humblest christian. Superficial minds will be apt to start at the obscurities of religion, and to conceive that every thing is plain which relates to the objects of science and the affairs of common life. But the profound thinker will perceive the fallacy of this; and when he observes the utter impossibility of tracing the real relations of impressions and phenomena to the *objects out of ourselves*, together with the necessity of believing a First Cause, he will be ready to conclude that the Deity is, in a manner, the only reality, and the truths relating to him the most certain, as well as the most important. Common minds mistake the *deep impression* of the *phenomena* of worldly affairs for clearness of evidence with respect to the objects themselves, than which nothing can be more distinct.

You perceive I can do nothing more on this subject than echo back your own sentiments, which are such as I have long maintained.

* * * * * *

I wish it were in my power to throw some additional light on these intricate points, but I am utterly unable to do it. How far you can introduce any speculations of

this sort into your philosophical works with advantage, you are most competent to determine. It may probably have the good effect of admonishing sciolists that the pursuits of science, when conducted with a proper spirit, are not inimical to religious belief.

My health is, through unspeakable mercy, perfectly restored, excepting a good deal of the pain in my back. It will give me much pleasure to see you at Foulmire. Please to remember me affectionately to Mrs. Gregory.

I am, my dear friend, with ardent wishes for your temporal and eternal welfare,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,
ROBERT HALL.

XV.

TO WILLIAM HOLLICK, ESQ.

ON HIS RECOVERY FROM A SECOND ATTACK.

Feb. 1, 1806.

My dear Friend,

Accept my sincere thanks for your kind letter. Every assurance of respect from old friends, and especially from one whose friendship has been so long tried, and evinced on so many occasions, must afford much satisfaction to a person in my situation. Though Providence has produced a separation, which will probably be of long continuance (and in one sense final), nothing, I am certain, can efface from my mind those impressions of gratitude and esteem with which I shall ever look back on my connexions at Cambridge and its vicinity. With the deepest submission, I wish to bow to the mandate of that awful, yet, I trust, paternal power, which, when it pleases, confounds all human hopes, and lays us prostrate in the dust. It is for Him to dispose of his creatures as he pleases; and, if they be willing and obedient, to work out their happiness, though by methods the most painful and afflictive. His plans are infinitely

extended, and his measures determined by views of that ultimate issue, that final result, which transcends our comprehension. It is with the sincerest gratitude I would acknowledge the goodness of God in restoring me. I am, as far as I can judge, as [remote] from any thing wild and irregular in the state of my mind as I ever was in my life; though I think, owing probably to the former increased excitation, I feel some abatement of vigour. My mind seems inert. During my affliction I have not been entirely forsaken of God, nor left destitute of that calm trust in his providence which was requisite to support me; yet I have not been favoured with that intimate communion and that delightful sense of his love which I have enjoyed on former occasions. I have seldom been without a degree of composure, though I have had little consolation or joy. Such, with little variation, has been my mental state, very nearly from the time of my coming to the Fishponds; for I had not been here more than a fortnight, before I found myself perfectly recovered, though my pulse continued too high. It has long subsided, and exhibits, the doctor assures me, every indication of confirmed health.

With respect to my future prospects and plans, they are necessarily in a state of great uncertainty. I am fully convinced of the propriety of relinquishing my pastoral charge at Cambridge, which I shall do, in an official letter to the church, as soon as I leave Dr. Cox, which, I believe, will be at the expiration of the quarter from my coming. My return to Cambridgeshire was, I am convinced, extremely ill judged; nor had I the smallest intention of doing it, until I was acquainted with the generous interposition of my friends, to which it appeared to me that my declining to live among them would appear a most ungrateful return. I most earnestly request that they will do me the justice to believe, the intention I have named, of declining the pastoral charge, does not proceed from any such motive, but from the exigencies of my situation, and a sense of duty. I propose to lay aside preaching for at least a twelvemonth.

Please to remember me affectionately and respectfully to your cousin, and all inquiring friends, as if named.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obliged Friend,

ROBERT HALL.

P. S. Please to present my best respects to Mrs. Hollick and your daughter.

XVI.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS.

Fishponds, Feb. 15, 1806.

Since I have been here, another stroke has befallen me, under which my heart is bleeding. This is the death of my dear and only brother two years older than myself, who died about ten days since, without a moment's warning. He was reaching something from the chimney-piece, and instantly dropped down, and expired. He had been for some years truly religious, so that I entertain pleasing views respecting his eternal state, which is my only consolation. I feel poignant regret at not having treated him with more tenderness. I longed to have an opportunity of convincing him of the ardour of my affection; which makes me feel most painfully, that in losing him, I have lost the human being, of all others, the most dear to my heart. I hear a voice, in this most affecting providence, speaking to me aloud, "Be thou also ready." I follow the dear deceased in his mysterious journey, and seem to stand on the very boundary that divides two worlds from each other, [while the] emptiness and vanity of every thing besides [God], is deeply impressed on my heart. My hopes, of an earthly kind, are extinguished. I feel my emptiness. but, O, I long to be filled. To be convinced of the vanity of the creature is, I know, the first step to happiness: but what can this avail, unless it be succeeded by a satisfying sense of the fulness and all-sufficiency of God! Through mercy my health is perfectly restored.

XVII.

TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, OF THE BAPTIST PERSUASION, IN CAMBRIDGE.

ON RESIGNING THE PASTORAL CHARGE.

Leicester, March 4, 1806.

My dear Brethren,

A succession of afflictive dispensations has brought me to the resolution of resigning the pastoral office, which I have for a considerable number of years exercised among you.

I cannot reflect on the numberless and decisive proofs you have afforded me of your attachment during that period, without the warmest gratitude; nor think of a final separation without regret. No people ever received the ministerial services of their pastor with more candour; or evinced, on every occasion, a greater solicitude to contribute to his happiness. It is not necessary to dwell at large on the circumstances which have determined me to relinquish the situation I have so long held. They are partly *local*, in the strictest sense of the word, and in part arise from my recent illness, which suggests the propriety of suspending the ministerial functions for the present.

The dissolution of that union, which has subsisted with such uninterrupted harmony, is the work of Providence, whose operations are often mysterious, but always infinitely wise and gracious. Permit me, my dear brethren, at parting with you, to express the deep and unalterable sense I shall ever feel of the candour, kindness, and generosity, I have uniformly experienced at your hands. You will ever have a distinguished place in my affections and my prayers. It is my earnest prayer, that the truth it has been my humble endeavour to inculcate among you may take deeper and deeper root in your hearts and lives; that your may obey from the heart that form of doctrine into which you have been delivered. May our separation not be final and eternal; but may we be so preserved and sanctified, by the influence of divine grace, that, when the transitory days of our mortal pil-

grimage are concluded, we may be permitted to spend a blissful eternity together! Let me make it my earnest request, that you will be careful to choose a minister whose heart is truly devoted to God, and who is determined, like the great apostle, "to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

That your faith may increase exceedingly, and your love one towards another abound more and more, till you arrive "at the fulness of the stature of perfect men in Christ," and are "presented before him unblamable in holiness," is the habitual and earnest prayer of

Your late unworthy Pastor,
And affectionate Friend,
ROBERT HALL.

XVIII.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT CAMBRIDGE TO THE REV. ROBERT HALL.

IN REPLY TO THE PRECEDING.

Dear Brother,

Though your letter, containing your resignation of the pastoral office amongst us, had been expected, in consequence of an intimation previously communicated by you, it was received by us with deep regret; yet, we trust, in the spirit of humble submission to that all-wise Providence, which has seen fit to dissolve the union that has so long and so happily subsisted between us. Be assured, you will ever hold a distinguished place in our most affectionate remembrances; nor shall we forget you in our mingled supplications at the footstool of divine mercy. We hope ever to preserve a grateful recollection of your long and faithful service. We bear you witness, that the prevailing desire of your heart, and the constant object of your labours, was to disseminate amongst us the knowledge of the true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; and to fit us, by divine grace, for the enjoyment of a future

world. And we pray, that the important truths which you have so repeatedly and energetically inculcated, may constantly be adhered to by us. In the loss of such a pastor, we have sustained a deprivation of no common magnitude; but, while we lament the painful separation which has taken place, we desire to mingle, with feelings of sorrow on our own account, those of sincere thanksgiving on yours. We rejoice that God has restored you; and we pray that your health and strength may long be preserved; and that He, who appoints the bounds of our habitation, will direct you to whatever place may be most conducive to your permanent health and happiness. As frequently as possible, we hope you will favour us with your friendly visits. The real and ardent friendship which subsists betwixt us, it is our sincere desire, should continue through our mortal existence, and gather fresh strength by every future interview; and we feel no hesitation in believing, that it will survive the grave, and be perpetuated to immortal ages.

In the choice of your successor, we wish to be guided by the motives you recommend, and the principles you have so frequently inculcated; and we entreat an interest in your prayers, that the great Head of the Church will supply us with one zealous for his honour, and qualified to feed the people of his charge with the bread of immortal life.

Now, dear brother, with the greatest affection, "we commend you to God, and to the good word of his grace."

Signed at the desire, and on behalf, of the whole church, this 16th day of March, 1806.

William Hollick.*

* These, and the two preceding letters to Mr. W. Hollick, will serve to correct the misstatement which has appeared in two or three periodical and other publications: "The intervention of malady separated him from a congregation which he had multiplied in number, and elevated in character; and when he unexpectedly recovered, he found that his office was filled by another." Nothing can be more inaccurate than this assertion; nothing more unjust. The church and congregation, during Mr. Hall's separation from them in consequence of his indisposition, evinced the utmost solicitude on his account. They made arrangements to receive weekly communications as to his progress towards re-

XIX.

TO MR. NEWTON BOSWORTH, CAMBRIDGE.

Leicester, August 26, 1806.

My dear Friend,

My long silence will naturally surprise you till you hear the reason of it. The box which contained your letter has remained at Bristol, unopened, till last week; nor did I receive your very kind favour until a few days since. This is the true state of the case, and must plead my apology for a silence which must otherwise appear so unkind and unnatural.

Permit me to express my acknowledgements for the expressions of regard contained in your letter, of the reality and warmth of which I cannot entertain a moment's hesitation, as they are so perfectly in unison with every part of your conduct during all the years I have had the happiness of knowing you. Your congratulations on my recovery affect and humble me, as I am perfectly conscious of my not deserving the hundreth part of the esteem they imply. If my ministry has been at all blessed, as the means of spiritual good to your soul, God alone is entitled to the praise. I have been, in every sense of the word, an unprofitable servant. When I consider the value of souls, the preciousness of the blood of Christ, and the weight of eternal things, I am ashamed

covery; which were read publicly to the assembled congregation every Sunday. On the permanent dissolution of their connexion, to which the above letters so affectingly allude, they did not content themselves with bewailing his loss; but they exerted themselves most actively and successfully in raising a sufficient sum to purchase for him a handsome annuity, and otherwise contribute effectually to his comfort. During the quarter of a century which intervened between his removal from Cambridge and his death, they continued to manifest for him the most cordial affection, and the highest veneration. His periodical visits to them were seasons of real delight, diffusing (shall I say?) a gleam of pious hilarity and intellectual and spiritual refreshment over all. And more than once has Mr. Hall assured me, that every such visit produced the most unequivocal proofs of their undiminished esteem and friendship. I feel it due to my old and valued friends at Cambridge, a sense of whose kindness, intelligence, and excellence, the lapse of nearly thirty years has not effaced, to record this my humble testimony, to their delicately grateful and generous conduct towards their former invaluable pastor.—ED.

and astonished to think I could have spoken of such subjects with so little impression, and that I did not travail in birth more, till Christ was formed in my hearers. I have no plea for my negligence, no hope of pardon, but what is founded on that atonement and intercession I have endeavoured, though so very faintly, to recommend to others. Every fresh experience of life convinces me, more and more, of the truth and importance of the doctrines I have preached; and, blessed be God! I am sometimes favoured with some experimental taste of their sweetness. As often as I look back on such seasons, I am ready to exclaim,

"Where can such sweetness be,
As I have tasted in thy love,
As I have found in thee?"

O, my dear friend, let us press towards the mark. *We* know where true happiness is to be found. "Let the dead bury their dead;" but let us follow Christ, and aspire, with an intense and increasing ardour, to the heavenly kingdom. Happy shall we be, if we can habitually act as becomes those who are but a few steps from heaven.

I rejoice in your domestic felicity. May it long be continued, and, if possible, increased, without being permitted (and God can attemper all things) to abate your ardour after heavenly enjoyments.

Your account of the reception of Mr. Gregory's book on Mechanics, gives me great pleasure. He

* * * * * *

thus affording a demonstration that the highest scientific attainments are, by no means, incompatible with the simplicity of the gospel. Please to remember me affectionately to him when you write. May God long preserve and bless him!

I thank you sincerely for your proffered assistance in packing up my books, which I shall probably shortly need; for I am tired of wandering, and propose soon to fix upon some place where I may have my books about me.

Remember me to Mrs. Bosworth, and all other friends, as if named. Pray let me hear from you soon and often.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours most affectionately,

Robert Hall.

XX.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS.

Leicester, Jan. 2, 1807.

My dear friend Phillips,

I ought long since, to have written to you, but you know what a poor correspondent I am, and how reluctant to write letters. I feel myself much obliged by your kind favour. Your letter, like many other things else in human life, contained a mixture of what excited melancholy, with what produced pleasing emotions. The succession of calamitous accidents which befel our friends in your neighbourhood, is truly singular and affecting. I am happy to hear every one of the sufferers is doing well. I hope it will have the right impression on their minds, by bringing them nearer [to God]; and they will have abundant occasion for thankfulness, even if their respective calamities had been worse. Present my kind and sympathizing respects to each of them, the first opportunity. Your account of Ireland interested me much. The state of the class of inhabitants you describe, is truly deplorable. I am afraid any attempts to remove their ignorance will have little success, unless some methods could be adopted, at the same time, to relieve their excessive poverty. There is a close connexion betwixt the two. I suppose their poverty must be ascribed to the want of encouragement to industry afforded by the landed proprietors, and, perhaps, in some measure, to the hardihood of their constitution, which enables the Irish peasantry to subsist and multiply, where a more feeble race would absolutely perish. You give no account of the Lakes of Killarney, which, I understand, are singularly sublime and beautiful.

You are desirous of some information respecting my situation and intentions. I have not yet taken possession of my apartments at Enderby, having been detained at Leicester by the affliction of my sister and neice; the former is nearly recovered, the latter is not worse, and I intend to go to Enderby to-morrow, or Monday at farthest. Enderby is a very pleasant village, about five miles from Leicester; it stands upon a hill, and commands a very pleasant and beautiful view. I am extremely pleased at the prospect of seeing you there in the spring. I hope nothing will occur to disappoint me. Be assured I shall do every thing in my power to make your visit pleasant. I have no immediate intention of coming to London: there are some friends there, and in the vicinity, it would give me much pleasure to see; but the bustle and hurry of London are little suited to my taste.

* * * * * *

But my times are in the hand of God; and my chief solicitude, if I do not greatly deceive myself, is to please him in all things, who is [entitled] to all my love, and infinitely more than all, if possible; and who is, indeed, my "covenant God and Father, in Christ Jesus." I do not at all regret my past afflictions, severe as they have been, but am persuaded [they] were wisely and mercifully ordered. I preach most sabbaths, though at no one place statedly, and have found considerable pleasure in my work. I have little or no plan for the future, but endeavour to abandon myself entirely to the divine direction. All I have to lament is the want of more nearness to God, and a heart more entirely filled with his love, and devoted to his service. Pray let me hear from you often: a letter from you never fails to give me a high degree of pleasure. Please to remember me affectionately and respectfully to Miss Wilkinson, and to Mr. Wilberforce, should you see him, and to Mr. Beddome's family, in all its branches.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours most affectionately,
ROBERT HALL.

Present my kind respects to Mrs. Phillips.

XXI.

TO THE REV. DR. COX.

Enderby, April 26, 1807.

Dear Sir,

*   *   *   *   *   *

*   *   *   *   *   *

The lukewarmness of a part, the genteeler part of congregations, with respect to vital religion, is matter of grief to me. Many have the form of religion, while they are in a great measure destitute of the power of it. With respect to the excuses that this class are ready to make for neglecting private meetings, it might not be amiss to urge them to inquire, whence the *indisposition* to devote a small portion of their time to religious exercises arises. If it spring from a secret alienation of heart from devotional exercises, or from a preference to the world, it affords a most melancholy indication of the state of the mind. It is surely a most pitiful apology for declining such services, that they are not commanded by the letter of the New Testament. Whoever says this, virtually declares that he would never give any time to religion, unless he were compelled. The New Testament is sparing in its injunctions of external or instrumental duties. But does it not warn, in a most awful manner, against the love of the world; enjoin fervour of spirit, deadness to the present state, and the directing all our actions solely to the glory of God? How these dispositions and principles can consist with an habitual reluctance to all social exercises of religion, except such as are absolutely and universally enjoined, I am at a loss to determine. If the real source and spring of the neglect of devotional exercises, whether social or private, be an estrangement from God, an attachment to the world, the pretences by which it is attempted to be justified only enhance its guilt.

With respect to the doctrine of election, I would state it in scripture terms, and obviate the antinomian interpretation, by remarking that man, as man, is said to be chosen *to* obedience, *to be* conformed to the image of

his Son, &c., and not on a foresight of his faith or obedience; as also that the distinction betwixt true believers and others is often expressly ascribed to God. "*Thou* hast hid these things."—"To you it is *given* not only to believe," &c. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." As the doctrine of election, however, occupies but a small part of the New Testament revelation, it should not, in my opinion, be made a prominent point in the christian ministry. It is well to reserve it for the contemplation of christians, as matter of humiliation and of awful joy; but in addressing an audience on the general topics of religion, it is best perhaps to speak in a general strain. The gospel affords ample encouragement to all: its generous spirit and large invitations should not be cramped and fettered by the scrupulosity of system. The medium observed by Baxter and Howe is, in my opinion, far the most eligible on these points.

On the other subject you mention,* I perceive no difficulty; none, I mean, to embarrass the mind of a minister. On a subject so awful and mysterious, what remains for us but to use the language of scripture, without attempting to enter into any metaphysical subtleties, or daring to lower what appears to be its natural import? A faithful exhibition of the scripture declarations on this subject must be adapted, under a divine blessing, to produce the most awful and salutary effects.

With best wishes for your welfare,

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately and sincerely,

ROBERT HALL.

XXII.

TO THE REV. DR. RYLAND.

Leicester, Dec. 28, 1808.

———— I hope you continue to enjoy much religious prosperity. The only comfortable reflection, in the pre-

* That of future punishment, I presume.—ED.

sent state of the world, is the apparent increase of the kingdom of Christ. His glory, his gospel, his grace, are, I hope, considerably advancing: and how little are all the revolutions of kingdoms, when compared to this! We should rejoice in every event which seems to tend to that issue; and, on this account, I am more than reconciled to the recent intelligence from Spain. I long to see the strong-holds demolished, and "every thing that exalteth, brought into subjection to Christ. How deep an infatuation blinds the counsels of Great Britain! How fatal, may we fear, the intimate alliance of this country with the papal power, which the vengeance of God has marked out for destruction! May the Lord bring good out of evil, and "fill the whole earth with his glory!"

I am now removed to Leicester, and find my situation, on the whole, very comfortable. The people are a simple-hearted, affectionate, praying people, to whom I preach with more pleasure than to the more refined audience at Cambridge. We have had, through great mercy, some small addition, and hope for more. Our meetings in general, our prayer-meetings in particular, are well attended. For myself, my mind and body are both much out of order; awful doubt and darkness hanging on the former, and much affliction and pain in the latter: let me, dear brother, entreat an interest in your prayers.

I am, my dear brother,

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT HALL.

P. S.—In gratitude to God, and to my dear companion, I must add, that marriage has added (a little to my cares,) *much* to my comfort, and that I am indulged with one of the best of wives.

XXIII.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS.

Leicester, Feb. 16, 1809.

* * * * * *

* * * Rogers I have not yet found time to read through. I thank you for it, and am much pleased with the piety and spirit of it, as far as I have gone. I have read Zeal without Innovation with extreme disgust; it is written with shrewdness and ability, but is, in my esteem, a base, malicious, time-serving publication. It was lent me by Mr. Robinson, who, in common with all the serious clergy in these parts, disapproves it highly. I suppose the author wrote it to curry favour with such men as the . . . . and to procure a living. His poverty is to be pitied; but I hope I would rather starve in a workhouse than be the author of such a book. I am afraid there is a party rising among the evangelical clergy, that will ruin the reformation which has been going on in the established church during the last forty or fifty years. * * * * * * * *.

XXIV.

TO A FRIEND IN PERPLEXITY AS TO HIS RELIGIOUS STATE.

Leicester, April 20, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I am much concerned to learn the unhappy state of your mind respecting religion. You may depend upon no one seeing the letter but myself; and I wish it were in my power to say any thing that might be of use. Of this I have very little hope; for the adage might, in too great a degree, be applied to me—"Physician, heal thyself;" as I labour much under darkness and despondency respecting my religious prospects, through the prevalence of indwelling corruptions. What then, my dear sir, can I say to you or to any other? I would

recommend you, above all things, to have recourse to prayer—to fervent, importunate, persevering prayer. Take no denial: if you cannot pray long, pray often. Take the *utmost pains* in preparing your heart, and in the exercises of the closet; for, surely, an assurance of the forgiveness of sin, the light of God's Spirit, and the animating hope of glory, are worth all the labour, and infinitely more than all, we are capable of using to attain them. They are heaven upon earth. From what I know by experience, though it is not with me now as in months past, the enjoyment of God throws every other enjoyment that can be realized or conceived at an infinite distance. Fix it on your mind, my dear friend, as a most *certain* truth, that there is nothing deserves to be pursued for a moment but in *subordination to* God and *for* God, and then act accordingly, and you will probably soon find a strange change for the better. Exposed, as you necessarily are, to the society of many who have either no religion or feel but little of its vital power, you are in peculiar danger of forming slight ideas of its importance; of being taught to look upon it as a *secondary* thing, an occasional law, whose authority is to be interposed, like the law of the land, to regulate other things, instead of looking upon it as a vital, prevailing principle of the heart and life. Many, it is to be feared, never attain the blessings of religion, because they never form that estimate of its dignity which is consonant with the oracles of God. Did it not seem like presumption, I should earnestly recommend the daily perusal, besides the Scriptures (which I take it for granted you cannot omit), of some practical and experimental divinity. We have great store of it:—Doddridge's Rise and Progress; his and Watts's Sermons; and, above all, if I may speak from my own experience, the wonderful Howe—particularly his Blessedness of the Righteous, his Living Temple (the latter part), his Treatise on Delighting in God. Perhaps you will say you have not *time* for this: but here the question recurs again—What is of the most importance for a creature that is to live for ever;—to be rich in this

world, or to be rich towards God? I hope you will pardon the liberty I have taken, from a regard to the motive; which, you will do me the justice to believe, is pure and disinterested.

I remain, my dear Sir,
Yours affectionately,
ROBERT HALL.

XXV.

TO THE SAME.

Leicester, July 17, 1809.

My dear Sir,

I duly received yours. Be assured I sympathize with you in your spiritual trials, having had a large share of them myself. I wish I could adopt the language of Dido to the Trojans throughout—"*Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.*" The "*haud ignara mali*" is fully applicable to myself; but I am afraid I have not yet learned the art of suggesting what may be useful to others in similar circumstances. I want "the tongue of the learned, that I may be able to speak a word in season to him that is weary." I congratulate you on your retaining your religious sensibility: the most dangerous spiritual symptom is apathy, or a stupid indifference to our real situation. While we have feeling enough to complain, we give unequivocal indications of *life*; however disordered its functions or languid its actions may be. What advice, my dear sir, can I possibly give you, but what your own good sense will suggest—that of *giving all diligence, and following on?* "Then," says the prophet, "shall ye know, if you *follow on* to know the Lord." Set a firm resolution against the indulgence of sin in any form. I know you too well to suspect external irregularities; but we are both fully convinced "the commandment is exceeding broad," and that, if we would walk in the light of God's blessed countenance, we must keep the heart with all diligence, or, as the expression signifies, "above all keeping." You will doubtless find your account in

the serious, punctual, undeviating attention to private prayer, and reading of the Scriptures.

I feel a pleasing confidence that you are too much impressed with the importance of religion to suffer these exercises to be superseded by any worldly enjoyments, or to be attended to in a slight, perfunctory manner, resting in the *opus operatum*, instead of improving them as means of nearness to God, and growth in grace. Would it not be advisable for you to give yourself up publicly to the Lord?* Might not your solemn engagement to be his, in the ties of a christian profession, have a happy influence on the train of your sentiments and conduct; not to say, that if you truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, you must necessarily feel a desire to keep his commandments?

* * * * * *

I am, dear Sir,
With great respect, yours, &c.
ROBERT HALL.

XXVI.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS.

Leicester, Sept. 1, 1809.

My dear Friend,

Whether I owe you a letter, or you me, I cannot say; but this I know, that it seems a long time since I heard from you. My affection for you renders me uneasy under so long a silence, and makes me anxious to hear how you go on. The last letter you favoured me with gave me a pleasing account of your religious prosperity: your prospects, in this respect, are, I hope, brighter and brighter. Among the very elegant and polite part of your audience, you are too well acquainted with human nature to flatter yourself with *much* success; but you have been honoured as the instrument of

* This phrase implies, among dissenters, uniting in fellowship with *the church*, as distinguished from merely constituting one of *a congregation*.—ED.

drawing a considerable number of the poor and of the middling classes to a place where they had no thought of attending before. Here you will, in all probability, find your most favourable soil. I am sure you will cultivate it with care; and hope you will, under the blessing of God, reap an abundant harvest. Were we but more strongly and abidingly impressed with the value of immortal souls, with what godly simplicity, what earnestness, and what irresistible pathos, should we address them! Perhaps the inequality of the effect produced by different preachers, is to be ascribed more to the different degrees of benevolent and devotional feeling, than to any other cause. Job Orton remarks, in his Letters, that he knew a good man of very slender abilities who was eminently useful in the conversion of souls; which was, in his opinion, to be ascribed chiefly to the peculiarly solemn manner in which he was accustomed to speak of divine things.

I had hoped to have seen you during the summer at Leicester, which would have been a very high gratification, as I know not when I shall reach London. I have no spirits for such an undertaking: my complicated afflictions have left me but half a man. The apprehension of mingled society, of being exposed to various sorts of company, is too formidable for me at present to surmount. I am severely and habitually afflicted with my old complaint: but have I any room to murmur?

* * * * * *

I am happy in my domestic connexion, being blessed with an affectionate, amiable woman, and a lovely little girl, about five months old. My dear wife enjoys a better state of health than for some time past, and the dear infant is quite well. We have lately enlarged our place of worship, and have the prospect of its being well filled. I hope we experience some little of the presence of the Lord in the midst of us. I beg to be most respectfully remembered to Miss Wilkinson, and to thank her for her very kind congratulations and good wishes on my marriage. Remember me also most

affectionately to dear Mrs. P——, and to all inquiring friends; and pray let me hear from you very soon.

I am, dear Sir,
Your affectionate Friend and Brother,
ROBERT HALL.

XXVIII.

TO EBENEZER FOSTER, ESQ., CAMBRIDGE.

Manchester, Nov. 4, 1809.

Dear Sir,

I write this from Manchester, to which your letter was sent from Leicester. I am obliged to you for it. It gives me much pleasure to hear of the very flourishing state of the congregation; though I am concerned at the poor account you give me of Mr. Chase's health. I hope he will be speedily restored, and be continued as an extensive blessing among you. The prosperity of the kingdom of Christ is the most delightful object a real christian can contemplate. May he speedily take "upon himself his great power and reign." I cannot but indulge the belief, that real christianity is increasing in the world; and that what we perceive of this kind at present, is but the dawn of a more glorious era which will shortly arrive. The convulsed state of the world, and the limitation of popish power, announce the speedy accomplishment of prophecy, in the triumphant establishment of the kingdom of Christ. Wherever the gospel is preached, there is a disposition, unknown in former times, to attend upon it.

Poor M——! he has finished his career.

When we look back upon those who have been too much addicted to the love of the world, what a dream, what a vanity does it appear; how unworthy the supreme pursuit of a creature who is hastening to his final account! May we, my dear Sir, be preserved from this fatal snare, and possess as though we possessed not.

* * * * *

XXVIII.

TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

Leicester, Jan. 23, 1810.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your kind letter. I am happy to hear you are so comfortably settled, and that God has provided you with a suitable companion, with whom I wish you may enjoy many years of felicity. As to the proposal you are so good as to urge, of my visiting Pembrokeshire next summer, it will be quite impracticable. I have one summer excursion in view already; and a visit to so remote a part would occupy far more time than it would be proper for me to be absent from Leicester. I have had, in a manner, a new congregation to form; so that any considerable absence is attended with serious inconvenience, as the people are, as yet, by no means compacted and consolidated. I consider it as the first duty of my life well to cultivate my own field, which is such, at present, as demands all my care; which, I may say, with humble gratitude, it rewards, the Lord having, in various instances, set his seal to my poor labours. The congregation which I serve consists mostly of the poor, many of whom are, however, "rich in faith;" so that I can truly say I never found so much encouragement in my work as since I have been here. The effect of time, and of spirits broken by a series of afflictions, has been to make me very reluctant to travelling. Nothing but the claims of absolute duty can surmount that reluctance. My ambition is to spread the savour of the knowledge of Christ in the connexion where I am placed, content to leave the more enterprising and brilliant career of an evangelist to persons of more active and ardent minds. It would give me much satisfaction to meet my dear friend Phillips anywhere, and more especially under your hospitable roof. That pleasure, however, I must postpone till I go to London, or until he will favour me with a visit in Leicestershire. I shall be always happy to see you, and to hear of your success and prosperity in your great work. Of this you say you can speak nothing at

present. The congregation, I fear, from the character of its former pastor, has sunk into a very lethargic state. It will be your study and ambition, I am persuaded, to awaken them, and to recall them to the power of that religion which "makes all things new." Whatever speculative difficulties you may have felt, or may still feel, you can be at no loss to discover, that the warm and affectionate preaching of Christ crucified is the grand instrument of forming lively Christians. May you, in this glorious attempt, be abundantly honoured and blessed.

I return you my warmest thanks for every expression of esteem and affection with which you have honoured me, and remain, with sentiments of high esteem, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother,
ROBERT HALL.

XXIX.

TO WILLIAM HOLLICK, ESQ.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. HOLLICK.

Leicester, July 6, 1810.

My dear Friend,

I sincerely sympathize with you, in the heavy stroke with which your heavenly Father has seen fit to visit you in the removal of your dear partner, with whom you have so long trod the paths of this weary pilgrimage. I hope she has gone to eternal rest; and you, my dear friend, will, I trust, meet her in that world where no separation, no sorrow or sin, will ever enter. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in him."

I have endeavoured already, and often shall, "to spread your case before the Lord," and to entreat him to support you under, and sanctify you by, this dispensation. You have learnt, my dear friend, the terms on which all earthly unions are formed; the ties on earth are not perpetual, and must be dissolved; and every enjoyment, but

that which is spiritual,—every life, but that which is "hid with Christ in God,"—is of short duration. Nothing here is given with an ultimate view to enjoyment, but for the purpose of trial, to prove us, and "to know what is in our hearts, and, if we are upright before God, to do us good in the latter end." You had, no doubt, often anticipated such an event as the inevitable removal of one from the other; and I hope neither of you were wanting in making a due improvement of the solemn reflection, and laying up cordial for such an hour. Still, I am well aware that the actual entrance of death into the domestic circle is unutterably solemn, and places things in a different light from what we ever saw them in before. You seem, and it is with much pleasure I perceive it, fully aware,—thoroughly apprised of the true improvement to be made of this heavy blow, which is undoubtedly intended to quicken your preparation for a future world. It loudly says to you, and to all, "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." God grant it may be eminently sanctified, by weaning you more completely from this world, and "setting your affections" more entirely and habitually "on the things that are above." You will then, in the midst of that deep regret such a loss has necessarily inspired, have cause to bless God that you were afflicted.

We have been, for some time, in expectation of a visit from you. I hope you will not disappoint us, nor delay it long, as my dear wife expects in a very few months to be confined. We shall rejoice to see you, and shall be happy to contribute, in some measure, to your solace and relief. My wife, whose health is extremely delicate at best, and very often interrupted, desires to be most respectfully and affectionately remembered to you. Please to present my kindest and most sympathizing regards to your daughter, and love to inquiring friends.

I remain, dear Sir, with best wishes and prayers, your affectionate and sympathizing friend and brother,

Robert Hall.

XXX.

TO R. FOSTER, JUN., ESQ., CAMBRIDGE.

Leicester, July 12, 1811.

My dear Sir,

I thank you for your favour, inclosing a draught for £75. 2s. 9d.; and am highly gratified with the genuine sentiments of piety contained in your letter. It has been a peculiar satisfaction to me, for a long time past, to hear of your decided attachment to the cause of God; and it is my earnest prayer that the life of God, which his grace has commenced, may flourish more, till it issues, as it infallibly will, in the fruit of eternal life. Go on, my dear Sir, in the course you have begun; dare to be singularly good, and to follow Jesus "out of the camp, bearing his reproach,"—a reproach that will be found "greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt." You are already the joy of good men, and a shining hope of the church; and it is impossible to calculate the eminent advantage you may be of to the interests of religion, in the sphere where Providence has placed you.

Your admonitions I take in good part. I am not without a consciousness of my not having exerted my small abilities to the extent I ought in the cause of religion; but I find strange and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, arising in part from a certain fastidiousness of taste, which renders me dissatisfied, and even disgusted, with all my performances. My extreme ill state of health must also be taken into the account. I am seldom free from pain, which is often very severe.

*　*　*　*　*

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours most affectionately,

ROBERT HALL.

XXXI.

TO JOSEPH GUTTERIDGE, ESQ., DENMARK HILL, CAMBERWELL.

Leicester, September 16, 1811.

My dear Sir,

I have not relinquished my intention of publishing the substance of the sermon delivered at Prescott-street; though I think it will be most proper to print it in the form of a charge, in which it was first delivered. You may rest satisfied I shall not omit making mention of the occasion on which it was preached at Prescott-street, and embracing the opportunity of recommending, as far as lies in my power, the new institution to the attention and patronage of the religious public. The reason of the sermon not appearing sooner, has been, principally, an almost uninterrupted struggle of painful discouragement, arising from its appearing so contemptible under my hand.* The truth is, I am tormented with the desire of writing better than I can; and, as this is an obstacle not easily overcome, I am afraid it will never be in my power to write much.

* * * * *

XXXII.

FROM MR. GUTTERIDGE TO MR. HALL.

PROPOSING THAT HE SHOULD PREACH A SERIES OF LECTURES IN LONDON.

Dear Sir,

I am now about to address you on the subject of our conversation when last at Denmark Hill. I then suggested to you the wishes of many friends, that you would consent to visit London the following spring, and make arrangements for spending a longer time with us. Several persons have been inquiring if there were a probability

* The sermon here referred to is that on the Discouragements and supports of the Christian Minister.—Ed.

of such an event being realized; but I did not wish to trouble you farther on the subject till it became needful to do so.

My idea has been, that if you would spend six weeks at least with us, a course of lectures might be established, to be preached by you, that, under a divine blessing, without which all our efforts are vain, might be productive of much good at the present season. A course of lectures, say you;—on what subject? I reply, on any subjects that have a tendency to counteract the impiety and irreligion of the world in which we live: and surely you will admit this is latitude sufficient. I am aware that some objections will arise in your mind. You will perhaps indignantly ask, 'Does he think I will go to London to preach for money?' You may rely upon it, I have too much regard for you to wish you to do any thing that might even be interpreted to your discredit. But is it dishonourable in a man, who has a family that have claims upon him, to do that which may promote their comfort? Is the fair and honourable exercise of talent to be deprived of a suitable remuneration? Is not "the labourer worthy of his hire?" And although he who is called to preach the gospel is not to be actuated by motives of "filthy lucre," yet he is nowhere called to despise the cup of blessings that Providence may put into his hands, "who giveth us all things richly to enjoy." All this I am saying, upon a presumption that your friends will cheerfully raise a subscription, of which you will know nothing, *save the contents.*

I should propose to obtain places of worship well adapted for evening lectures; probably one in the city, and one on the other side Temple Bar; and that, on the Lord's-day evening, and also one evening in the week, you might alternately preach there. This plan would leave your sabbath mornings at liberty to oblige particular friends, or to supply destitute congregations; and in this respect, I would propose to fix you to Prescott-street, if I dare. The time that appears to me most suited for the purpose would be the beginning of April; and then you would be in Town, through the missionary meetings.

There is also, in the beginning of May, a most important service to be performed for the "Orphan School;" *the only school*, among protestant dissenters, where the children are *maintained* as well as *educated*, and which has been upon the decline, but is now, we hope, reviving. I should rejoice to see you become the advocate of so extensive and valuable an object; and, if you fall in with my design, you will, I hope, undertake it. I hope Mrs. Hall and the children will come with you: you have friends who will be glad to take them in; but if you would prefer a lodging, we can, I doubt not, manage that to your satisfaction. Thus have I given you the outlines of a plan which is subject to any alterations you may propose. Let me beg you to take it into your serious consideration, and to send me soon a favourable answer.

I am, dear Sir, affectionately yours,

JOSEPH GUTTERIDGE.

XXXIII.

TO JOSEPH GUTTERIDGE, ESQ.

IN REPLY TO THE PRECEDING.

Leicester, Feb. 29, 1812.

My dear Sir,

I have taken into my most serious consideration the proposition laid before me in your last letter, and have sought the advice of those friends whose opinion I judged most fit to be relied upon. Some of them are decided in favour of my compliance, others leave the matter in suspense. My people at Leicester have given their cheerful consent, on the supposition of its appearing to me to be the path of duty. Upon making it frequent matter of prayer, I am inclined to think it may be my duty to fall in with the ideas entertained by you and others upon this point, provided my health admit. The difficulties and discouragements attending the affair appear to me so formidable, that nothing could induce me for a moment to think of encountering them, but an ap-

prehension that I might, by yielding to them, be going against the will of God. I am habitually alarmed at the thought of my having already too much hid my little talent in a napkin; and should consequently rather risk the most unpleasant imputations than increase that score of guilt. It *ought* to be (alas! how weak my heart!) "a small thing with me to be judged by man's judgement: there is one that judgeth, even the Lord." The business, however prudently conducted, will expose me to the censure of pride and presumption, on the part of many; and my deficiencies will disappoint, I am certain, the expectation of my partial friends. Nevertheless, supposing it possible some good may result, I am inclined to say, "I will go in the strength of the Lord my God." An impediment lies in the way, however, at present, which must be removed before I can think of it; that is, the state of my health. My old complaint has grown upon me so much of late, that it is with *great difficulty* I can go on with my stated work. I have been for some time under the necessity of taking fifty, and sometimes a hundred, drops of laudanum every night, in order to procure any rest. The pain has been both violent and very nearly constant. It is quite out of the question to think of a journey to London, unless I am better. So situated, whatever arrangements are made, connected with the proposal you mention, must be *conditional;* and I shall, if you judge it fit to give it any further consideration, inform you previously whether I can come or not. It seems to me there are some objections to the *place* of preaching being alternate: will not this interfere with its being well known? the same objection seems to apply to the appointment of different places. These, however, and all other points, I wish to submit to the decision of friends. Mrs. H. will, I believe, not be able to accompany me. She desires to be most respectfully remembered to you and Mrs. G. Please to present my best respects to Mrs. G. and Miss G., and believe me to be, with great esteem,

Dear Sir, yours affectionately,

ROBERT HALL.

XXXIV.

TO JOSEPH GUTTERIDGE, ESQ.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Leicester, March 29, 1812.

My dear Sir,

I delayed writing to you as long as I could, that I might the better ascertain the state of my health at the time when it was proposed I should undertake my journey to London. I now feel myself under the necessity of informing you and my other friends, that my health is such as renders it impossible for me to think of engaging in such a matter. It is with the utmost difficulty that I can go through my stated duties. I am ready to suspect, that the complaint under which I have so long laboured is intended to "weaken my strength by the way," and, at no great distance, to bring me to "the house appointed for all living." The pain is almost incessant, and often so violent as to put my patience to its utmost exercise. I have now for many weeks been under the necessity of taking seventy or eighty drops of laudanum every night, and am often obliged to rise and repeat the draught before I can procure any rest. It appears to me preposterous to think of coming to London in such a situation. I can scarce ever sit up an hour together; lying down is my constant position. I consulted some judicious friends on the subject of your proposal, and above all, made it my business to seek direction from the Fountain of wisdom. The result was, that I came to a determination to suspend the affair upon the state of my health about the time my engagements, in the event of compliance, were to commence. Providence, by having placed me in my present circumstances, appears to have decided the affair; and in that decision I perfectly acquiesce. My mind is, to say the truth, relieved from a considerable weight; for nothing but a fear of neglecting a possible opportunity of doing some little good, could have reconciled me for a moment to the proposal you, I am persuaded with the best intentions, were

pleased to make. The appearance of vanity and self-consequence attached to it, always presented itself as a most formidable obstacle; but this I had made up my mind to surmount, reposing, in the midst of much sinister [interpretation,] on the rectitude of my intentions, and my conscious desire of complying with the leadings of Providence. You, my dear Sir, have been actuated, I doubt not, in this affair, by a solicitude to promote the interest of religion, as well as by motives of the truest friendship, as far as concerns myself; and you will not fail to [reap] the satisfaction which arises from the possession of such sentiments. For the trouble you have been at in making the necessary arrangements, you will be so good as to accept my sincere acknowledgements.

With truest affection and esteem,
I remain, dear Sir,
Yours constantly,
ROBERT HALL.

XXXV.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS.

Leicester, April 16, 1812.

My dear Phillips,

I was extremely gratified to hear once from you again; aud if you knew how much pleasure it yields me to receive a letter from you, I flatter myself you would indulge me oftener. I have little to communicate that will be interesting to you, but could not let so affectionate an epistle lie by long unanswered. My state of health, I need not tell you, has long been extremely ill: it appears to me as if my constitution was breaking up; and I have little doubt, unless my malady takes a favourable turn, it will, ere it be long, reduce me to the dust. I am not better than my fathers: I am deeply conscious I am corrected less, yea, infinitely less, than my iniquities deserve. I hope I am more anxious to see my heavy affliction sanctified than removed. Whether it would be best for it to be removed, may well be doubted; of

the admirable benefits arising from sanctification, both in time and eternity, there can be no doubt. I presume the Lord sees I require more hammering and hewing than almost any other stone that was ever selected for his spiritual building, and that is the secret reason of his dealings with me. Let me be broken into a thousand pieces, if I may but be made up again, and formed by his hand for purposes of his mercy. I see more and more of the unspeakable blessedness of being made like God, and of becoming partaker of his holiness. I see it, I say, but I do not attain; or, at least, in so unspeakably small a degree, that I have every moment reason to be abased, and "repent in dust and ashes."

My ministry continues, through mercy, to be considerably blessed in awakening sinners. I cannot but hope the church and congregation are in a very promising state. We are in perfect harmony, and we have frequent additions. Last Lord's day se'nnight I baptized thirteen, and others stand ready. Blessed be the Lord! My strain of preaching is considerably altered; much less elegant, but more intended for conviction, for awakening the conscience, and carrying home truths with power to the heart. Our congregation is plain and serious, with a sprinkling of genteel people; but none in the church: and, indeed, if any saving fruit has been reaped from my ministry, it has been almost entirely among the middling and lower classes.

Yesterday we had our second jubilee anniversary of the Bible Society for Leicestershire, a happy, harmonious meeting, with one little exception. On the church side, several clergymen spoke; but no dissenter. I augur the most glorious and important consequences from the Bible Society. I have just finished the perusal of Mr. Scott's answer to Bishop Tomline. He has demolished the bishop entirely. I find but little in Mr. Scott's views against which I can object. It is somewhat loosely written, but full of argument, instruction, and piety. There is a trait of egotism in the good man which had better been avoided. He quotes almost entirely from his own works. It is well for the bishop his rank excuses him from

replying to it. He would make a miserable figure. I thank you for your favourable opinion of my discourse. It is flat; but if it be in the least adapted to do good, I ought to rest satisfied. I am much rejoiced to hear of your intention of visiting Leicester. You must spend a sabbath with me. I heard Mr. —— twice, [as he passed] through Leicester: he is a young man of some talents, of a good deal of brilliancy, but miserably defective in simplicity. I am afraid a vicious taste is gaining ground, both among preachers and hearers; all glare and point, little to the understanding, and nothing to the heart. But my paper admonishes me to close, with my best respects to Mrs. Phillips, Miss W——, Mr. and Mrs. Beddome, &c., in which Mrs. H. joins me;

I remain, my dear Sir,
Your affectionate and constant Friend,
ROBERT HALL.

XXXVI.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO MRS. ANGAS, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

Leicester, May 8, 1812.

Dear Madam,

Though I have nothing particular to communicate, I knew not how to let Mrs. O. proceed to Newcastle without dropping a line to acknowledge your kind letter, and present my gratitude for the interest you are pleased to take in my welfare. The esteem of the pious and excellent of the earth, I always consider as a very distinguished privilege; though the possession of it is not unmingled with mortification at the consideration of my deserving it so little, and my perfect conviction, that did they know me more they would esteem me less. It ought to humble most persons, to reflect, that for a large portion of the respect in which they are held, they are indebted to ignorance; to the necessary unacquaintance with each other's hearts. The Great Supreme is the only being

from whom nothing is to be feared on this head; the only one who may be safely trusted with the worst secrets of our hearts. "His mercy endureth for ever." He also is able, and only he, to correct the obliquities he discovers. The Leicester news you probably hear from all quarters. I go so little into society, that the report must be strong and loud which reaches me.

* * * * * *

XXXVII.

TO MR. NEWTON BOSWORTH, CAMBRIDGE.

Leicester, April 23, 1813.

My dear Sir,

I am ashamed of not having earlier answered the kind letter I received from Mrs. B., for which I beg you will present my hearty acknowledgements. I must also thank you for your book on the Accidents of Life. It is a most entertaining production, and will, I hope, be extensively useful in preventing or remedying a large portion of human calamity. It is plainly dictated by the same spirit that breathed in a Howard and a Hanway, and will entitle you to a portion of their reward.

As I hope to see Cambridge in the course of this summer, you will not expect from me a very long letter. I recollect with fervent gratitude, the kindness I there met with; mixed with much shame, to think it should have been lavished on such an undeserving object. When I recollect the course of my ministry at Cambridge, I feel continual matter of condemnation. 'Do you preach better now, then?' you will perhaps say. In one respect I do not preach half so well:—I do not bestow near so much attention on my composition: but I trust I do insist on more interesting and evangelical topics. A greater savour of Jesus Christ does, I trust, breathe through my ministry, in which it was formerly greatly deficient.

But why do I speak so much of myself?—We last Monday held our annual [meeting of the] Bible Society. It was more numerously attended than ever, and delight-

ful to see clergymen and dissenting ministers sit on the same seat, and ardently engaged in promoting the same object, with perfect unanimity. We cannot say of the past times, that they were better than the present. I think the present age is greatly improving: it must improve, in proportion as the grand catholicon is more universally applied. * * * *

It would have given me great pleasure to have seen you this summer at Leicester: I am sorry your letter indicates no intention of that sort.

* * * * * *

I am much delighted with reading a new translation of Mosheim's Commentaries on the affairs of the Christians before Constantine. It appears to me one of the most instructive theological publications that has appeared for a multitude of years. With kind remembrances to Mrs. B. and all inquiring friends,

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend,

ROBERT HALL.

P. S. We have had an irreparable loss in the removal of dear Mr. Robinson. It has been a most affecting event, and has left a chasm which can *never* be filled up. Last Wednesday I endeavoured to improve the event by a suitable discourse.

XXXVIII.

[When Mr. Hall visited Cambridge, in the summer of 1813, he preached a sermon to the young persons belonging to the congregation there with which he had formerly been connected. The next day they assembled, and addressed to him a letter of thanks, to which the following is his reply :—]

To my young Friends, of Mr. Edmonds's congregation:

Thursday, 1813.

My dear young Friends,

I feel greatly obliged to you for your very affectionate testimony of your esteem, and rejoice to find my feeble

attempts to impress religious sentiments were not altogether without effect. Your letter breathes a spirit of unaffected piety, which it is impossible to witness without emotion. I hope the Lord will enable you to persevere, and that, "being planted in the house of the Lord, you will flourish in the courts of your God, and bring forth fruit even to old age." Be sober, be vigilant; watch closely over your own hearts, and be much in earnest supplication to the Fountain of grace. Bless God, for having inclined your hearts to seek him; and doubt not that he will most graciously afford all the succour necessary to enable you to finish your course with joy.

That you may very greatly profit by the means of grace with which you are favoured, and become the joy of your parents, the hope of your minister, and great examples of pure and undefiled religion, is the earnest prayer of,

My dear young Friends,
Your affectionate Brother,
ROBERT HALL.

XXXIX.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO THE REV. W. BUTTON.

Leicester, October 25, 1813.

Dear Sir,

I have taken into consideration the proposal you have made. I know not what to say to it. If I shall part with the copyright of the little tracts, it may be, possibly, an injury to my family, and put it out of their power to publish a complete edition. Your proposal is very handsome; but this is one of my objections to it. Another is, it is so long since the tracts made their appearance, and several so short, and their subjects so miscellaneous, that I am afraid it will have an ostentatious appearance. I hate the appearance of vanity: I have so much of it in my heart, that I am ashamed it should display itself to the eyes of the world. As to my sermon, I am doing something to it at intervals. I have, indeed, nearly

written it out in the rough, but I am so much disgusted with it, as usual, that I can by no means let it appear, unless it is in my power greatly to improve it.*

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

XL.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS, CLAPHAM.

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF HIS OWN SON.

Leicester, Feb. 28, 1814.

My dear Friend,

I am greatly obliged to you for your kind and consolatory letter, replete with those topics whence alone true consolation can be deduced. The stroke has been very severely felt by us both, but certainly most by dear Mrs. Hall. She was doatingly fond of our lovely boy. For my own part, I was not at all aware my affection for him was so strong, until he was removed from us: my anguish was then great. It seemed to me as if I felt more on this occasion than I should at the loss of either of my others. This feeling, I suspect, was delusive, and arises from our being incapable of estimating the strength of our attachment to any object till it is removed. I was disappointed in his being a boy; for [recollecting] my own extreme and portentous wickedness, I fancied there was something in the constitution of boys peculiarly tending to vice, and adverse to their spiritual interests. I had also remarked that females seemed much more susceptible of religious impressions than men. On these accounts I trembled for his salvation, and did not feel that gratitude for the blessing vouchsafed me which I ought. I suspect I greatly displeased God by my distrust of his goodness, and that he saw it meet to adopt this method of chastising me. May it be sanctified as a means of making me humble, heavenly, and submissive. It is a very solemn consideration, that a part of myself is

* The sermon here alluded to was never published.

in eternity; in the presence, I trust, of the Saviour. How awful will it be, should the branch be saved, and the stock perish!

Pray for me, my dear friend, that this may not be the case; but that I may be truly sanctified, and permitted to walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the consolations of the Holy Ghost.

Mrs. Hall has been very ill, occasioned in a good measure by the shock she has received, but is better. She is looking forward, with considerable anxiety, to her confinement, which she expects in less than three months. She is so extremely weak and delicate, that I have very painful apprehensions respecting the issue. My *wish* and endeavour is, to leave her, myself, and my dear children, in the hands of God. But how difficult it is to do so! Let me, once more, entreat an interest in your prayers.

* * * * * *

XLI.

TO THE REV. W. BUTTON.

Leicester, *Feb.* 3, 1815.

My dear Sir,

I am much concerned to hear of your disorder in your eyes: it is, indeed, a great affliction, and demands the exercise of much submission to the wise Disposer of all events. I am afraid it has had, and will have, a great effect in depressing your spirits. Remember, my dear brother, the Lord means to do you good by all his several dispensations. He has already given you his Son; and how "shall he not with him freely give you all things?" He has conferred upon you spiritual discernment and heavenly light: how infinitely more important than the "light of the body," which in all eyes must soon be darkened! I hope, however, if it is a cataract, you may get relief: that is a disease which I understand has frequently been cured. Say, then, my dear friend, with David, "Why art thou disquieted within me? I shall

yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God." It will be, and has been, my habitual prayer, that you may be strengthened, comforted, and relieved.

With respect to the reviewing Mr. ——'s sermon, I must be excused. I have entirely done with reviewing: it is an occupation, of all others, I dislike, and shall entirely give it up. If you wish me to publish, you should never wish me to review; for you are not aware what a serious interruption it is. I compose very slowly; and what I have written in the Review has been a *very* great interruption. I have read Mr. ——'s sermon with much pleasure; it is judicious, serious, and affecting; but I am well aware how extravagantly his friends at ——— have always overrated his talents; and were I to review, and express myself in such terms only as the occasion would justify, I should mortify, instead of gratifying. In truth, reviewing at the request of particular friends is a snare for the conscience. I never wished any person to review for me.

XLII.

TO THE REV. DR. FLETCHER, OF BLACKBURN,
NOW OF STEPNEY.

Leicester, Feb. 21, 1815.

Dear Sir,

I duly received the five-pound bill which your friend has been so kind as to appropriate to the Baptist Mission. He may depend upon its being faithfully applied to the purpose for which it is intended, and you will be so good as to thank him in my name for it.

I most sincerely beg your pardon for not having replied to your kind letter: the truth is, not sitting down to reply to it immediately, the impression I had upon my mind afterwards was, that you did not wish or expect me to reply. I recollected only that it contained a pretty pressing remonstrance with me for not publishing more; a subject on which I have often been urged, much to my

concern and vexation. It pains me, my dear Sir, to be condemned and reproached upon a subject which is sometimes a source of more internal uneasiness than is generally supposed. I am far from being satisfied with my own conduct in this particular, but know not how to remedy it. It is not indolence, I can truly say, which prevents me; but a certain fastidiousness and difficulty of being pleased, which really rises to the magnitude of a mental disease.

I feel myself, in all my performances, so short of that standard which I have formed in my own mind, that I can truly say I contemplate my little productions with a kind of horror. If I could dismiss this feeling, I should much oftener try the patience of the public. That what I have written meets with your approbation cannot fail to encourage me; it is "*laudari à viro laudato:*" but permit me to express my surprise, that you should express yourself in terms so extremely disproportioned to my merits.

I shall be happy to hear from you, whenever you are disposed to write; and remain,

Dear Sir, with high esteem,

Your affectionate Friend,

ROBERT HALL.

XLIII.

TO THE REV. DR. FLETCHER.

Leicester, May 26, 1815.

Dear Sir,

With respect to Mr. Fuller's last moments, I have very little to communicate. His complaint was of a nature that left him very little opportunity of conversing with ease and composure. He was oppressed with a prodigious load of corporeal misery. He said, I believe, more than once, "All misery centres in me, and I cannot die." In a letter he dictated to Dr. Ryland, a few days before his death, he expressed himself thus:—"My state of mind is, in one word, this; no despondency, no

raptures." He said to his friends, he felt that trust in Christ, that he could plunge into eternity. He was a prodigious sufferer during his last illness. He said to Dr. Ryland, "I have written much and said much against the abuse of the doctrine of grace, but that doctrine is all my support in the prospect of eternity. I have no hope of being saved, but through the free sovereign grace of God, flowing through the atonement of Christ. I recollect nothing very particular respecting his first introduction into the ministry. Dr. Ryland will, I believe, compile a pretty extensive memoir of him. He has been strongly urged so to do. He was in many respects the most memorable man it has ever been my happiness to know, and his loss will be deplored as irreparable. He possessed good sense in a more perfect degree than any person I ever knew; embraced every object with a clearness, facility, and precision, almost peculiar to himself. He certainly possessed genius in a very high degree; but it was more a modification of intellect than a vigour of imagination; though in the latter faculty he was not defective. I loved and esteemed him more than I can express; and how his loss can be supplied in the mission, I am at an utter loss to conjecture. But God is all-sufficient. Let me entreat your prayers to God that he would provide. I feel much gratified at your intention of improving the death of our most lamented and venerable friend. Wishing you much of the blessing of God in your important engagements, and begging to be remembered to Mrs. F., though unknown,

I remain, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.

Friday.

XLIV.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Leicester, June 17, 1815.

My dear Brother,

I am sorry you should continue to importune me about that wretched oration, which it is my *unalterable* resolution never to print. It was not fit to be delivered, much less to be presented from the press. I may be mistaken; but I always conceive that it is a respect due to the public, whenever we appear before them, to do our best, and not to put them off with a weakly or more deformed part, of our intellectual progeny. I laboured under an extreme depression of spirits; I was perplexed, between an imperfect written composition, a sort of funeral sermon delivered the last Sunday, and an attempt at extempore speaking. It would neither be respectful to Mr. Fuller nor to the public, nor justice to myself, to publish such a wretched piece of inanity. In delivering the oration at all, I performed a service for which scarce any money would have bribed me; but to have the publication of it demanded, under pain of the displeasure of Mr. Fuller's friends, is intrenching rather too much upon the independence of private judgement. Do not understand me, my dear Sir, as at all displeased with you for urging the matter: I am speaking only upon the *supposition* that Mr. Fuller's family or friends demand the publication.

As you have intimated a willingness to publish memoirs, I would strongly recommend publishing neither the sermon nor the oration. They are utterly unnecessary if the memoirs are published; not only so, but they would stand in each other's way. When a biography is promised, it is not, I think, usual for the same person to publish a funeral sermon previously. It is slaking the public curiosity prematurely. If you persist in your intention of publishing memoirs, I should feel no objection to taking an opportunity of testifying my profound esteem and friendship for dear Mr. Fuller, in some form which you may deem most eligible; but let me, my dear

Sir, hear no more of the oration. My resolution is unalterable upon that subject.

* * * * * *

* * * As far as my acquaintance with sober Calvinists extends, they do not object to the doctrine of disinterested love, so much as to the naked and abstracted form in which some of the American divines have presented it. A portion of love to God, resulting from a spiritual perception of his intrinsic beauty, enters, I have no doubt, into the essence of true religion; but some of the Americans have given a prominence to this subject, as appears to me, beyond what exists in scripture.

My work on mixed communion will be out, I trust, in about a fortnight. It is written, I hope, in a christian spirit, and is calculated to do good rather than harm. I am most perfectly convinced that the Baptist sentiments will never prevail upon the opposite system. My sincere wish is, that truth and candour may be promoted in the church.

I remain,
Your affectionate Brother,
Robert Hall.

XLV.

TO MR. JOSIAH CONDER.

Leicester, Sept. 1815.

Dear Sir,

I owe you many apologies for not sooner noticing the letter you were so good as to address to me a considerable time since. The only reason I can plead for my silence is, the pain it necessarily gives me to put a negative upon wishes warmly, and, as I believe, sincerely expressed. After having so frequently stated my repugnance to writing reviews, I feel myself at an utter loss to express the same sentiment in terms more strong or more efficacious. There is no kind of literary exertion to which I have an equal aversion, by many

degrees; and, were such things determined by choice, it is my deliberate opinion I should prefer going out of the world by any tolerable mode of death, rather than incur the necessity of writing three or four articles in a year. I must therefore beg and entreat I may not be urged again upon a subject so ineffably repugnant to all the sentiments of my heart.

From what I have seen of the recent execution of the work especially, I am convinced my assistance is not in the least needed. It is, I believe, growing daily in reputation, and, I hope, in circulation; and I have no doubt but that, under your skilful management and that of your coadjutors, its reputation will not only be sustained, but will be sufficient to engage far superior assistance to mine. I admire the Bible Society inexpressibly: but how is it possible to say any thing in its praise or vindication, which has not been said a thousand times; or where would be the safety of depicting, in their true colours, the character and conduct of that whited sepulchre? Besides, let me add, my dear Sir, that my other engagements are such, that the business of reviewing is incompatible with them, unless I were to form the resolution of having nothing to do with the press, or others for me. I feel myself much honoured by the expression of your kind regard, and beg leave to assure you that I am, with the truest esteem,

Your sincere Friend,

And obedient Servant,

ROBERT HALL

XLVI.

TO THE REV. W. CHAPLIN, BISHOP STORTFORD.

Leicester, Monday, Sept. 22, 1815.

My dear Sir,

I hope you will excuse my neglect in not replying to your very kind invitation. I designed fully to reply to it without delay; but one circumstance occurred after another, in that busy scene, to occasion delay until it was

too late. It would have given me, I flatter myself, at least as much pleasure as to yourself, to have proceeded to Stortford, and spent a day or two there. I shall ever retain a lively and grateful impression of the happy hours I have passed at Stortford, and of the distinguished politeness and attention on your part, which have chiefly contributed to render them so. But the fact is, while I am at Cambridge, the present claimants upon my time are so numerous, that, unless I could considerably protract my stay, I find it next to impossible to make excursions to any considerable distance.

Providence has so disposed the bounds of our habitation, as to preclude that intercourse which I can truly say I frequently recall, but never without emotions of warm affection and gratitude. Nothing but death will efface from my recollection and heart the manly sense, the dignified politeness, and Christian piety, which have so frequently rendered your conversation so delightful. I rejoice to hear of your health, and prosperity, and usefulness; and that dear Mrs. Chaplin is spared to you. I bless God, that though we are separate for a time in the flesh, we are, I trust, joined in the Spirit, and permitted to make mention of each other in our prayers; and shall shortly, I humbly hope, be allowed to spend an eternity together. I often think, with much emotion, of our dear and venerable friend and father, Mr. Palmer. I feel that I have lost a rock in him: the loss of no man in that period of life would have affected me in any proportionable degree. But, alas! I shall probably soon follow him; and it becomes us, it becomes me at least, at my age, to make it my great concern that my own death may be holy. *Inter nos*, I could have wished the character of our dear friend, by Mr. Toller, had been a little heightened and warmer coloured. It is like a portrait that is not very defective in likeness, but has lain long in a damp place. There is one thing in your letter which gives me sincere pleasure, which is, that you have sometimes thought of favouring me with a visit at Leicester. Let it not be one of those schemes that die in thinking of. We have a spare bed, and such accommodations as

are indeed very inadequate to what you are accustomed to, but such as I flatter myself you will put up with. Be assured, there is no person it would give me more pleasure to see under my roof, than Mr. Chaplin, accompanied with Mrs. C. We will divide the labour of the sabbath.

I am, my dear Sir, with high esteem,

Yours most affectionately,

Robert Hall

XLVII.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Leicester, Oct. 25, 1815.

My dear Sir,

I have availed myself of the opportunity of returning your manuscript, by Mr. James. I am much pleased with it, as far as it has proceeded, and, judging from this specimen, have no doubt it will give satisfaction to the friends of our invaluable deceased brother, as well as the religious public at large. I found the whole narrative, respecting his child and his first wife, exceedingly affecting and interesting. I think you have done right in retaining it, as it sets his domestic character in a most pleasing light. It shows how perfectly compatible is great tenderness of heart, and an attention to minuter duties, with great powers of intellect, and an ardent pursuit of great objects. Biographers have usually been too sparing of such details. How delighted should we have been with such an exhibition of the characters of Edwards, Howe, and other illustrious Christian heroes! ——— has written to Mrs. B., earnestly importuning me to review his Life of Mr. Fuller, which is completed to the last chapter. I need scarcely say that I absolutely declined, informing him that it was impossible for me to do it, without a violation of honour and consistency. I suppose his book will be out shortly. I hope and believe, however, it will not prevent your work from ob-

taining a considerable circulation. Though I highly disapprove of ———'s publication, it is not impossible that posterity may obtain a juster idea of the character of our excellent friend, by comparing them, than by either of them separately. I am afraid my dear brother will be as sparing of his shades as he of his lights. Though his [Mr. Fuller's] faults were trivial indeed, compared to his excellencies, yet they were, in my view, very apparent; and, as is generally the case in very forcible characters, they possessed a certain prominence: on the whole, however, it will be long before we look on such a man.

XLVIII.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO THE REV. W. BUTTON.

Leicester, Jan. 1816.

When you see Mr. Ivimey, will you be so good as to give my kind respects to him, and thanks to him for his kind attention, and that of his fellow-editors. Tell him I shall take his suggestion into serious consideration; but whether I shall contribute to the [magazine] or not, I cannot say. I never yet felt the smallest inclination to read or to write in these sorts of miscellanies. With respect to the widows, anxious as I should be to promote their welfare, I have not the presumption to imagine my writing would be of any material benefit. To the whole class of publications, reviews, magazines, &c., I avow myself a total alien and a stranger.

* * * * *
* * * * *

XLIX.

TO THE REV. THOMAS GRINFIELD, CLIFTON.

Leicester, Feb. 5, 1816.

Rev. and dear Sir,

With respect to the salvability of socinians, for myself, I feel no hesitation. Their state appears to be clearly

decided by such Scriptures as these; "He that *seeth* the Son, and *believeth* on him, shall have everlasting life;" "He that *hath* the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." How can they be said to have the Son, who reject him in his distinguishing, his essential character, as the *Saviour* of the world; and how can he be a propitiation for sin to them who have no faith in his blood? When it is asserted that we are justified by faith, I can understand it in no other sense than that we are justified by a penitential reliance on his blood and righteousness. In rejecting the most fundamental doctrine of the gospel, the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, they appear to me to deny the very essence of Christianity. Their system is naturalism, not the evangelical system; and therefore, much as I esteem many individuals among them, I feel myself necessitated to look upon them in the same state, with respect to salvation, as professed infidels.

I am concerned, truly concerned, to find you speaking in terms so extremely disproportioned to my merits. While I feel myself gratified by the esteem of the pious and the able, praise so intemperate, I must confess, brings to my mind most forcibly the mortifying recollection of my own deficiencies.

I remain, with much esteem,

Your obliged Friend and Servant,

ROBERT HALL.

L.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Leicester, April 10, 1816.

My esteem for your character is such, that it is impossible for me to differ from you in opinion, or decline complying with your wishes, without considerable pain. I feel that pain on the present occasion. I am truly concerned to find your purpose is to form an auxiliary society at Bristol, to have public days, &c. &c.; being deeply

convinced of the truth of that axiom of our Lord's, that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation;" or, as Campbell translates it, "is not ushered in with parade." The Baptist Society has prospered abundantly, with the blessing of God, under a different management; and the unobtrusive modesty of its operations has been one of its strongest recommendations. That society has done much, and said little; it has shown itself in its effects, not in its preparations. I am much grieved that it is about to relinquish that praise, and to vie with [others] in the noise and ostentation of its proceedings. It reminds me of the fable of the frog and the ox. * *

* * * * *

* * * Why should we at last imitate what we have so long condemned? Why should we attempt a competition in a point of view in which we are sure to appear to a disadvantage? The expense of collecting ministers from remote places is not small; and, supposing their expenses to be borne out of the public fund, (and the situation of few allows them to travel at their own expense,) it will, I fear, more than counterbalance the pecuniary advantages resulting from the efforts at publicity. I have serious apprehensions that the ostentatious spirit which is fast pervading all denominations of Christians, in the present times, in the concerns of religion, will draw down the frown of the Great Head of the Church, whose distinguishing characteristic was humility. He did "not strive, nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." I am persuaded nothing can be more opposite to *your own* disposition than such a mode of proceeding, on which account I am the more surprised you should be induced to lend it your sanction. There appears to me a very simple and efficacious mode of supporting the Baptist Mission, without noisy appeals to the public. Let every Baptist minister make an annual collection in his congregation, and apply to his more opulent members and hearers besides, for their annual subscriptions; and all the money will be raised which ought to be raised by our denomination. With respect to others, the success of the mission, attested by its

periodical reports, will not fail to make the right impression. The best auxiliary societies, in my humble opinion, that can be devised, are already prepared to our hands in regular, organized churches, and in the certainty of meeting some hundreds of professing Christians every sabbath-day. I hope, my dear brother, you will not be offended with the freedom of these remarks. Were I to consult my inclinations, an excursion, in the pleasant month of July, to Bristol and to Wales, would be highly gratifying; but, from the considerations I have suggested, I must beg leave absolutely to decline your kind invitation. I do exceedingly deprecate the precedent about to be set at Bristol.

Your advice respecting my intended publication came too late. It was already in the press. I hope it will do no harm, if it does no good. I think the question of very considerable importance, and the abettors of free communion have been too languid in their exertions. I intend, my dear Sir, no personal reflection; but mention it as a general remark.

LI.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Leicester, May 27, 1816.

———— I read the letters of Mr. Fuller, on Robinsonianism, with much delight and approbation on the whole; but I think he has, as he was rather prone, carried the matter too far. For my part, I am far from believing the innocence of mental error on the one hand, or the *sinfulness* of every particular error on the other. I suspect that there are religious mistakes, which result from the circumstances and the imperfections of the present state, for which many good [men] will never be called to account; though I am far from supposing this extends to a denial of the great distinguishing principles of the gospel. On this occasion, I am disposed to adopt the old adage, *In medio tutissimus ibis.* The letters are ad-

mirable for their piety, and their masculine vein of reasoning.

With respect to Scotland, I must absolutely decline it. I have been already five weeks absent from my pulpit, on account of illness; and it would be extremely injurious to my congregation, to incur so long an additional absence. In truth, I am little fitted for distant excursions, on account of my liability to be attacked with such violent pain, which renders me a burden to myself and to all about me.

LII.

TO DR. RYLAND. (EXTRACT.)

June 19, 1816.

———— I sympathize, most sincerely, in the joy you must feel, as a parent, from the baptism of your daughter. I hope and pray you will ultimately have the pleasure of seeing all your children walking in the truth. I already begin to feel the spiritual interests of my dear children a frequent source of painful solicitude. Let me beg an interest in your prayers, for their conversion.

LIII.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS.

Leicester, May 12, 1816.

My dear Friend Phillips,

It is long, very long, since I had the pleasure of seeing or hearing from you. For the latter I can account in some measure, from the displeasure you conceived at my treatment of your servant, who, at your request, called upon me in the way to Harborough. I do freely confess myself to have been much to blame in that particular. My conduct was not such as ought to have been shown to any one; much less to a domestic of

yours, who called, at your request, to make friendly inquiries respecting my welfare. I sincerely beg your pardon, and also the pardon of the young woman, for that impropriety. In justice to myself, I must tell you how I was situated. When your servant called I was engaged in secret prayer; the door made fast. My servant-girl made a violent clamour at the door: I kept silence, intending her to understand that it was my wish not to be interrupted at that time. She continued, however, to knock at the door, as though she was determined to break it down. At length, I was under the necessity, fearing some accident, to open it; and being much irritated at the unwelcome interruption, and at the rude carriage of my servant, when I came to understand the errand on which the young woman came, I could not surmount my agitation sufficiently to give her the reception I ought. I was visibly pettish and chagrined. Such is the true state of the case; and I may observe as some apology for me, that sometimes the incessant interruptions I meet with, by people calling from a distance, is such, especially in summer, as to leave no time at all, sometimes not half an hour a day, that I can call my own. This operating upon a mind fond of retirement to an excess, sometimes almost drives me to distraction. The irritation and agitation it sometimes produces is inconceivable. I do most devoutly wish my friends would never give any commission to strangers to call upon me. The sight of strangers, especially when I cannot leave them when I please, is frequently distressing to me in a very high degree. But though I mention these circumstances as an apology, I am far from meaning to justify myself. I am aware of the extreme impropriety of indulging that irritability of temper, and am truly concerned at the instance of it, to which I have adverted. Let me indulge the hope, my dear friend, that this disagreeable circumstance will not put a period to that friendship which I have always so highly esteemed, and which has formed no inconsiderable part of the solace of my life. I have loved you ever since I knew you; and my attachment has increased exactly in proportion to my opportunities of

acquainting myself with your character. I hope you will forget and overlook this unpleasant business, and permit me again to class you amongst my dearest friends.

* * * * * *

LIV.

TO DR. GREGORY.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. BOSWELL BRANDON BEDDOME.

Leicester, Nov. 2, 1816.

My very dear Friend,

I have just received your letter, and cannot lose a moment in expressing the deep sympathy I take in the affliction arising from the melancholy tidings it announces. Alas! my dear friend, Boswell Beddome! My eyes will see thee no more! The place which once knew thee shall know thee no more! How many delightful hours have I spent in thy society—hours never more to return! That countenance, beaming with benevolence and friendship, will be beheld no more until the resurrection morn, when it will rise to shine radiant with immortal brightness and beauty. How thick and solemn the vicissitudes of death and calamity in that amiable and respectable family, the Beddomes! What awful reverses and catastrophes! Surely their heavenly Father must have destined them to some distinguished station in the eternal edifice, with whom he has taken such pains in hewing, cutting, and polishing. The dealings of God towards our dear Boswell have been at once severe and tender; and never, perhaps, were the preparations of mercy to be traced more distinctly, than in the events which have recently befallen him: the faculties extinguished for a while, to be restored; an antedated resurrection; as though God had determined to recast his whole nature into a crucible, previous to its being poured into the mould of eternity. I have been delighted to hear from various quarters, and particularly from Mr. Alexander, of the sweet, tranquil, and devotional state of his mind,

subsequent to his first attack; and had flattered myself with the hope of life being protracted to a distant period. But God's ways are not as our ways; nor his thoughts as our thoughts. After purifying our dear friend in the furnace of affliction, he judged it fit to cut short his work in righteousness. Be assured, my dear Sir, I deeply sympathize with you, and dear Mrs. G., both in your sorrow and your joy, on the present occasion. You have to sing of mercy and of judgement. The loss of such a parent must be long and deeply regretted; but there is so much to console and to elevate in this event, taken in all its bearings, that the tears you shed partake of a tender triumph. Our dear friend has reached the goal and gained the prize, which we are still doomed to pursue with anxiety and toil. May we, my dear friend, be quickened in our progress, by this most impressive event, and learn more effectually than ever to secure the one thing needful.

Your company at Leicester, and that of Mrs. G., would afford me the most exquisite pleasure: pray let me have it the first opportunity. My health, through mercy, and that of my family, are, at present, good; though I have, during the past year, met with awful mementos of my latter end.

* * * * * *

I beg to be most affectionately remembered to Mrs. Gregory, and every branch of the Beddome family, in which Mrs. Hall joins me; and remain, invariably,

Yours most affectionately,

Robert Hall.

LV.

TO REV. THOMAS LANGDON, LEEDS.

Leicester, March 12, 1817.

My dear Friend,

I am extremely concerned to hear of the ill state of your health, which, I fear, from what I have occasion-

ally heard, has been declining for some time: it is my earnest prayer and hope the Lord may restore it, and spare you many years, for the good of your family and of the church. It is a great mortification to me that I am situated at such a distance as renders it impracticable for me to see you often; but I retain, and ever shall retain, the strongest sentiments of friendship and esteem, and the remembrance of innumerable acts of kindness and attention from you in my early days. Those days are fled, and we are both now far nearer to eternity than then; both, I hope, nearer to consummate blessedness. For yourself, I feel a full persuasion that your removal (may it be at a distant period!) will be unspeakable gain.

To come to the business of your letter, I believe I am expected this year at Hull, and that it is wished to collect for the mission. As far as I can judge, it will probably be about the time you mention, in August; but this remains to be settled with Mr. Birt, from whom I have not yet heard. When I hear from him, and the time is fixed, I will let you know; and I hope I shall be able to comply with your wishes, by taking Leeds in my way home, as I expect to proceed thither from Cambridge. It will considerably facilitate my executing this plan, if your service is on a week-day, as I fear it will be quite out of my power to add another sabbath to my excursion. It will give me very high satisfaction to see you once more in the flesh, if it be only for a day or two; the time, I am afraid, must be very short.

I am far advanced in my answer to Mr. Kinghorn, and expect it will be in the press in a very few weeks. I am afraid it will be a more hasty performance than I wish. It is exactly as you say: there is more difficulty in disentangling his arguments, than in replying to them. He is unquestionably a clever man. I hope, however, that I have succeeded in showing the utter fallacy of the far greater part of his reasoning; but the public must judge.

* * * * * *

I desire to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Langdon, and remain,

Your most affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.

LVI.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Leicester, *Aug.* 8, 1817.

———————You are the best judge, but I am quite at a loss to perceive the utility of having all the missionary sermons preached at one season. Such a method of procedure makes more noise and parade than if they were preached at separate times, it is true; and this is probably the chief motive for preferring it, with those who appear studious of ostentation in religious exertions: but to a person of your disposition, I presume it would rather be repulsive. There is something I do not like in these perpetual suggestions of Mr. ——, respecting the deficiency of your collections for the Baptist Missions. If annual collections are made in each congregation, and such individuals are solicited to subscribe who are able and disposed, what can with propriety be done more? This perpetual struggle who shall get most money, and the theatrical and abominable arts exerted to procure it, prognosticate ill to the real interests of religion. There is one simple and effectual mode, in my opinion, of promoting the mission, which has never yet been tried on an extensive scale; namely, an annual collection in every baptist congregation which is attached to its interests. If such a measure were resolved upon in your association, it would soon spread to others, and would shortly become a standing practice in all our congregations: and their number is such, that, with the sums which would incidentally fall in from other quarters, the pecuniary resources of the society would be as great as we ought to aspire to. As to collecting a great number of ministers together, for the purpose of making

a collection, nothing, in my opinion, can be more injudicious. Besides, why should more assemble than are wanted? and what a waste of money attendant on the travelling of so many from distant parts! I do most earnestly wish, my dear brother, you would set yourself in earnest towards promoting annual collections, and making them universal.

I feel extremely concerned for the uneasiness you have felt. My poor prayers will not be wanting in your behalf: but, alas! how far am I from having power with God! Do not, my dear brother, let your spirits sink; you are dear to God, and he will, I am persuaded, support you, and bring forth your "righteousness as the light, and your judgement as the noon-day."

LVII.

TO WILLIAM HOLLICK, ESQ.

Leicester, August 11, 1817.

My dear Friend,

It is with great concern I have heard of your illness. Mr. Edmonds informed me [some time ago that] you were very poorly; but I have been much concerned to hear that you have since been much worse, and that you suffer much from your complaint.

Mrs. Hall and myself have been long anticipating the pleasure of seeing you shortly at Cambridge, and of renewing the pleasure we derived from our former visit. But, alas! how uncertain are all human prospects! how vain to depend upon any thing short of the promises of "Him who cannot lie!"

I hope, my dear friend, you enjoy the consolations of that religion you have been so long acquainted with, and the value of which is never more sensibly felt than under the pressure of affliction. How empty and delusive does the world then appear; and how unspeakably cheering that "good hope through grace," which the gospel inspires! To look up to God as a reconciled and compas-

sionate Father,—to know that "He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities," and that he "made an everlasting covenant with us, well ordered in all things, and sure,"—these are wells of everlasting consolation. You, my dear friend, are, I trust, no stranger to these sure cordials and supports; and, with these, should you be called to pass through "the valley of the shadow of death, you will fear no evil; his rod and staff will comfort you." It is impossible for me to suggest any thing to your mind, with which you are not already acquainted; but, might I be permitted to advert to my own experience, I should say, that I have found nothing so salutary as to turn the mind immediately to the Saviour: "Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." To pray immediately to Christ, to cast ourselves incessantly upon his power and grace, as revealed in the gospel, appears to be the best antidote to every tendency to despondency. I have no doubt that we are much wanting to ourselves, in not having more direct dealings with the Saviour, or not addressing him now in the same spirit in which he was applied to for the relief of bodily disease. He is exalted at the right hand of God, for the express purpose of dispensing pardon, peace, and eternal life to all that humbly seek his aid; and, wonderful condescension! he has declared "he will in no wise cast out whomsoever cometh unto him."

If I had not been particularly occupied with my answer to Mr. Kinghorn, which is now in the press, I should probably have been at Cambridge before this. Mrs. H. has suspended all thoughts of coming under present circumstances; but if it would be any particular gratification to you to see me, I will give up every engagement in order to see you; though it can be but for a few days. I desire to bless and adore the grace of God, in the signal change which has been wrought in the mind of Mr. N., to whom, as well as your daughter, Mrs. H. unites with me in affectionate remembrances.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate and sympathizing Friend,

Robert Hall.

LVIII.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO THE REV. W. BUTTON.

Jan. 5, 1818.

I am much surprised at the rapid sale of my sermon; which I impute, not so much to its intrinsic merit, (for I think I have printed better,) as to the occasion. Mr. Combe proposes to publish two editions more, making seven in the whole, as speedily as possible. I am afraid he will overdo it: if you are of that opinion, do stop him.* You will have an opportunity of judging while the fifth and sixth are selling.

* * * * *

* * * * *

LIX.

TO THE REV. JAMES PHILLIPS. (EXTRACT.)

Leicester, March 6, 1818.

* * * * *

What a loss would dear Mr. Hughes be to the Bible Society, and to the religious world in general! I beg to be most affectionately and respectfully remembered to him. Please to inform him, when you see him, how ardent is my desire, and that of thousands, that his most valuable life may be spared and protracted to a distant period. I rejoice to hear he is better, and hope he will be spared to the prayers of the religious public. I am quite of opinion, with you, that the admirable temper and prudence of Mr. Hughes have been as serviceable as the more brilliant talents of Mr. Owen: both admirable men,—*par nobile fratrum.*

* The Sermon here alluded to, was that on the death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales. Mr. Combe's anticipations as to its sale seem to have been more accurate than those of the author, for it has gone through *sixteen* editions.—Ed.

LX.

TO THE REV. THOMAS GRINFIELD, CLIFTON.

WHAT DOCTRINES ARE FUNDAMENTAL?

Leicester, Aug. 5, 1818.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your favour of July 2d, which ought to have been answered sooner, you will not expect me to enter deeply into the subject in the compass of a letter. A very few, and possibly very superficial remarks, must suffice.

1. Whatever opinion may be formed about fundamentals, it cannot affect the solidity of my reasoning, which is directed to this:—that no church has a right *(in foro conscientiæ)* to demand more, as a term of communion, than that church deems essential to salvation. The evidence of this proposition is quite independent of the question, what is essential to salvation.

2. That some truths are fundamental, besides those you have enumerated, appears to me sufficiently manifest from the word of God. If Christ is set forth as a propitiation, (or mercy-seat—*ἱλαστήριον*,) *through faith in his blood*, then, faith in his blood is fundamental; and, as the apostle is speaking of him as a *propitiation*, faith in his blood must mean a trust in him, under that character. But how can this consist with his being a mere prophet or martyr, or with the denial of his atonement? Again, —"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," &c. Every orthodox interpreter supposes this is intended to represent Christ crucified, or lifted up on the cross, as a divinely-appointed source of cure to our spiritual maladies, and consequently an expectation of spiritual benefit from him, as crucified. But how does this consist with the idea of his death, as a mere circumstance confirming his doctrine, exclusive of any proper influence it is supposed to exert in the pardon of sin? He is said to be "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" then justification, or acceptance with God, is the consequence of faith in him as the great antitype and completion of the legal sacrifices and ceremonies. We

are everywhere affirmed to be justified by that faith of which he is the object; and if the conceptions entertained by the socinians of that object are *essentially* different from ours, then must their faith in that object be equally so, and one or other of them essentially defective or erroneous. I am aware I have transgressed the canon you have laid down, which excludes a reference to particular texts. I have done so, because I am by no means satisfied respecting the justness of that canon. I am at a loss how general reasoning can ascertain the point in question, exclusive of an immediate appeal to the words of scripture. It is with God to determine what is essential to be believed, in order to salvation; and his determinations on this subject can only be ascertained by attentively weighing the sense of scripture. It is true, different parties interpret particular passages differently: to quote these, or similar passages, to a socinian, would, it is confessed, be to little purpose. But *you*, my dear Sir, profess *not* to be a socinian: with *you*, therefore, the only question ought to be, Is the proposition, which affirms faith in the atonement to be fundamental to salvation, a legitimate inference from the commonly-received, or orthodox interpretation, of these passages? If it is, we must either renounce our orthodoxy, or admit (however painful it may be) that inference. If the revealed method of salvation—revealed (I say) fully after the completion of the canon—is a cordial acceptance of Christ as the propitiation for the sins of the world, they who reject, deliberately and habitually, every idea of vicarious atonement, cannot be in that way. The belief of the messiahship of Christ was unquestionably held by the ancient heretics, or they could have made no pretension to be considered as christians in any sense; yet we know in what light they were regarded by the primitive christians: and why should they who deny the miraculous conception, the incarnation, and the atonement of the Son of God, be considered in a more favourable light? You yourself, not satisfied with the general proposition—the messiahship of Christ, descend to particular doctrines, *e. g.* the resurrection of the dead. But

to me it appears, that the collective moment of the doctrines I have mentioned is far more than that of the resurrection of the body, considered apart from the doctrine of immortality or a future life. In short, I can see no possible medium between giving up the doctrines already [mentioned], and asserting their fundamental importance; since, supposing us to interpret aright the passages on which we found them, their belief is everywhere conjoined with saving benefits. Whether we interpret these passages aright, is in no degree the question before us; but, solely supposing our interpretation correct, whether the *fundamental nature* of the doctrines in question is not a necessary consequence.

I return you my most sincere thanks for the favourable opinion you express of my performance; and that you may be guided into the midst of the paths of judgement is the sincere prayer of

Your obliged Friend and Servant,

ROBERT HALL.

LXI.

TO THE REV. JOSEPH IVIMEY, LONDON.

Leicester, Feb. 20, 1819.

My dear Sir,

I had intended, long since, to thank you very sincerely for your very valuable present of your two volumes of the History of the Baptists. I think it is highly creditable to yourself, and to the denomination to which you belong. I read them both with much interest and delight, and have seldom derived equal information and pleasure from any similar work. It will be a permanent monument of your talent, and devotedness to the cause of religious truth and liberty. You have brought forward a great deal of curious information with which the public were little, if at all previously acquainted. I was much pleased with your style of narration: it is perspicuous, lively, and perfectly unaffected. With respect to reviewing it in the Baptist Magazine, I am sorry to be

obliged to put a negative on your wishes. I have the *utmost aversion* to the whole business of reviewing, which I have long considered, in the manner in which it is conducted, a nefarious and unprincipled proceeding, and one of the greatest plagues of modern times. It was infinitely better for the interests of religion and literature when books had fair play, and were left to the unbiassed suffrages of the public. As it is, we are now doomed to receive our first impression and opinion of books from some of the wickedest, and others of the stupidest of men; men, some of whom have not sense to write on any subject, nor others honesty to read what they pretend to criticise, yet sit in judgement upon all performances, and issue their insolent and foolish oracles to the public. To abolish the practice of reviewing would be the greatest benefit a single man could confer on the public. At the same time, while *such things are*, the support of one like the Eclectic, upon sound principles, becomes a necessary evil. Your work wants no such artificial props.

Earnestly wishing your valuable life and labour may long be spared,

I remain, with much esteem, dear Sir,

Your obliged Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HA..

LXII.

TO MRS. TUCKER.

Leicester, April 16, 1819.

Dear Madam,

I feel myself much gratified and honoured by your kind and affectionate expressions of remembrance of an old friend; who, though long detained by circumstances from personal intercourse and correspondence, will never hear the name of Mrs. Tucker with indifference. I am delighted to hear from you; and to learn that, with all the changes effected by time, to which you so affectingly allude, the ardour of mind and warmth of sensibility, by which you were formerly distinguished, remain unim-

paired. How wonderful, how complicated, the mazes of Providence through which we are conducted in our pilgrimage to eternity! Could we foresee the trials which await us, the agonies and vicissitudes we are called to pass through, life would be insupportable; but we are led, like the blind, by a way that we know not; and strength is dealt out just in proportion to our day. Let us, my dear friend, look forward, and remember that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Let us hope that the fiercest part of our mortal warfare is passed, and that the evening of life will be more tranquil than the morning and the noon. May our deep experience of the mutability and vanity of the present shadowy state be improved into a perpetual motive for cultivating that heavenly-mindedness which is the only effectual antidote to the miseries of life. With respect to my visiting Plymouth, I have heard nothing of it from any quarter; and, should I be invited on the occasion you mention, it will be utterly out of my power this summer to comply with it. My engagements are already too numerous. But of this, my dear Madam, be assured, that should my steps be directed to Plymouth at any time during your life, I shall never for a moment think of taking my abode but at your house, with your permission, should I be invited by a prince. You little know me, if you suppose that rank and fashion would have the smallest influence in inducing a forgetfulness of ancient friendship. My chief inducement to visit Plymouth would be the pleasure of once more seeing and conversing with Mrs. Tucker. With my kindest remembrances to Mr. Tucker, I remain,

Dear Madam,

Your affectionate Friend,

Robert Hall

LXIII.

TO THE REV. THOMAS LANGDON.

Leicester, Jan. 11, 1820.

My dear Friend,

As Mr. Ryland is passing through Leeds, I take the liberty of troubling you with a few lines, just to let you know how I and my family are, and to express my undiminished affection and attachment to one of my oldest and best friends. I look back with renewed pleasure on the scenes through which we have passed, and deeply regret that Providence has placed us at such a distance from each other, that our opportunities of intercourse are so few. I hope the period will arrive when we shall spend an eternity together, and look back with mingled wonder and gratitude on all the way the Lord God has led us. What a scene will that present, when the mysterious drama shall come to a close, and all the objects of this dark and sublunary state shall be contemplated in the light of eternity!

> "O, could we make our doubts remove,
> Those gloomy doubts that rise;
> And see the Canaan that we love
> With unbeclouded eyes!"

I am very sorry to hear that you have been so much afflicted with your asthmatic complaint. It is high time you retired from your school, and procured a house nearer your meeting. I am persuaded your long evening walks are extremely prejudicial. Do, my dear friend, be prevailed upon to give up your evening lectures. It is what you owe to your family, to be as attentive as possible to your health. "Do thyself no harm," is an apostolic injunction.

I was much affected to hear of the death of dear Mr. Robert Spear. It must have been peculiarly distressing to the amiable youth I saw at your house. He was a most excellent man, and has, no doubt, had an abundant entrance into the joy of his Lord. May we be followers of those who thus inherit the promises. My health is, through mercy, very good. Mrs. Hall is at present very

much indisposed by a bad cold and oppression of the lungs; but, through blistering and bleeding, is, through mercy, better. Let me indulge the hope, that next summer you and Mrs. Langdon will visit me at Leicester. Be assured that the company of no friend would give me more pleasure.

Please to remember me affectionately to Mrs. Langdon, to your family, and to all inquiring friends, as if named. I am,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.

LXIV.

TO A GENTLEMAN AT TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Leicester, April 30, 1821.

Dear Sir,

I am considerably at a loss how to answer your letter. I sincerely sympathize with you in the perplexity you experience on a very high and awful subject. For my own part, I acquiesce in the usual and popular interpretation of the passages which treat on the future doom of the finally impenitent. My reasons, in brief, are as follows:—I assume it as a maxim, that we are utterly incompetent to determine, *à priori*, what is the amount of guilt incurred by such as reject the overtures of the gospel, any further than God has been pleased to make it the subject of express revelation; that the terms expressive of the duration of future misery are as forcible as the Greek language supplies; that the same term is applied to the duration of misery as to the duration of happiness, or even the eternity of God himself (Matt. xxv. 46; Rev. xix. 3); that the exclusion of the impenitent from happiness is asserted in the most positive terms—"they shall *not* see life," &c. &c., that "their worm dieth *not*, and their fire is *not* extinguished;" that positive terms may be understood in different degrees of latitude, but this is impossible respecting negative terms, since a negation admits of no degrees.

If the eternal misery of a certain number can be rendered conducive to a greater amount of good, in relation to the universe at large, than any other plan of action, then the attribute of goodness requires it: for I take it for granted, that the Supreme Being will adopt that scheme, whatever it be, which will produce the greatest quantity of happiness on the whole. But our faculties are too limited, and our knowledge of the laws of the moral world, and of the relation which one part of the universe bears to another, too imperfect, to enable us to say that this is impossible. For aught we know, therefore, the existence of eternal misery may not only consist with, but be the necessary effect of supreme goodness. At all events, it is a subject of pure revelation, on the interpretation [of which] every one must be left to form his own judgement. If the milder interpretation can be sustained by a preponderating evidence, I shall most sincerely rejoice; but I have yet seen nothing to satisfy me that this is the case.

I would only add, that, in my humble opinion, the doctrine of the eternal duration of future misery, metaphysically considered, is not an essential article of faith, nor is the belief of it ever proposed as a term of salvation; that if we really flee from the wrath to come, by truly repenting of our sins, and laying hold of the mercy of God through Christ, by a lively faith, our salvation is perfectly secure, whichever hypothesis we embrace on this most mysterious subject. The evidence accompanying the popular interpretation is by no means to be compared to that which establishes our common christianity; and therefore the fate of the christian religion is not to be considered as implicated in the belief or disbelief of the popular doctrine.

Earnestly wishing you may be relieved from all painful solicitude on the question, and be guided by the Spirit of God into the paths of truth and holiness, I remain,

Your obedient humble Servant,

ROBERT HALL.

LXV.

TO RICHARD FOSTER, JUN. ESQ.

Leicester, July 21, 1821.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your kind favour, (which I should have acknowledged sooner, but was not at home,) including a draught for 77*l*., and odd.

With respect to my sermon on the Trinity, I entered into no metaphysical disquisition whatever, I merely confined myself to the adducing passages which go to prove a plurality of persons in the blessed Godhead: such as the plural name of God in the Hebrew, the use of plural pronouns, the injection of plurals in the name of God coupled with singular verbs, the use of the terms, Makers, Creators, &c. I adduced Isaiah, saying, "The Lord hath sent me and his Spirit," &c. From the New Testament, I mentioned the baptismal form, the salutation to the Corinthians. To these I added the principal passages usually adduced in proof of the divinity of Christ and the personality of the Spirit. In short, it was a mere appeal to the letter of Scripture, without the smallest attempt at metaphysical refinement. I considered that doctrine continually as a doctrine of pure revelation, to which reasoning can add nothing but darkness and uncertainty. It appears, however, to me replete with practical improvement, being adapted to exhibit the part which each person in the blessed Trinity sustained in the economy of redemption, in the most engaging light, and to excite the utmost ardour of gratitude. The time was when I maintained the dual system, supposing the Holy Spirit to be an energy; but I have long found abundant reason to renounce that doctrine, and now find much complacency in the ancient doctrine of the Trinity.

As you mention the [meeting-house] being shut up, I hope it is to heighten it. I have no doubt that the extreme heat and closeness of the place must have a very injurious effect on the health both of the minister and people. I hope you continue comfortable, and that the Lord is giving testimony to the word of his grace. The

interest of religion, in a church which I served so long and so happily, will ever lie near my heart.

* * * * * *

I am your affectionate Brother,
ROBERT HALL.

LXVI.

TO THE REV. ISAIAH BIRT.

Leicester, May 29, 1822.

My dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you, for your very cheerful compliance with my proposal respecting supplying and preaching for our school during my visit to Kidderminster. It is an arrangement which gives high satisfaction to our people. The prospect of spending a little time with my dear and honoured friend, is, I confess, my chief inducement for proposing it. I should be very unhappy if I did not spend a little time with you, at least once a year; and as Providence has happily placed us in the same general vicinity, I shall always eagerly embrace the opportunity it affords. Friendship is the balm of life; and the thought that time must dissolve, ere long, the tie that has so long united us, would be melancholy indeed, were it not for the consoling recollection of a reunion in a better world: "Let us love one another, for love is of God;" and I hourly hope we are both training up for a world of perfect love. I am certain of it respecting *you.* O that I had as great an assurance respecting myself! But I have a feeble hope, which I would not exchange for a world!

With respect to the other part of the arrangement, having heard nothing from Tamworth as yet, it seems premature to say any thing of it. But I must say, that I can by no means comply with it. My lecture is on Wednesday, to which I justly attach a great importance; and the arrangement you mention would occasion my absence *two* Wednesdays, which I would not incur for any ordination whatever. Ordination services,

as they are now conducted, I consider as of more show than use. The presence of one or two ministers, along with the church, accompanied with prayer, and laying on of hands, and a few serious exhortations, would be a genuine scriptural ordination. Nothing can be more distant from this, than the manner in which these things are at present conducted. Suffice it to say, that I can by no means consent to be absent two lectures for such a purpose. You may, therefore, expect to see me on Friday at Birmingham. I beg to be most affectionately remembered to dear Mrs. Birt, and to dear Mrs. Tucker and her husband.

I am your affectionate Brother,
ROBERT HALL.

LXVII.

TO THE REV. THOMAS LANGDON OF LEEDS.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS DAUGHTER.

Leicester, January 9, 1823.

My dear Friend,

I am much concerned to hear of the heavy bereavement with which it has pleased God to afflict you and dear Mrs. Langdon, by the unexpected removal of your most amiable daughter. I never saw a young female whose character impressed me with higher esteem. I cannot wonder for a moment that your tears flow freely on her account. It is, indeed, a most severe and afflictive stroke, which none but a parent, and the parent of such a child, can duly appreciate. I feel myself highly honoured and gratified in the recollection of having possessed any share in her esteem.

Still, my dear friend, there is much mercy mingled with the severity of the dispensation. It is an unspeakable mercy to be able to reflect on the decided piety of the dear deceased, which so eminently prepared her for the event you so deeply deplore. Nor is it a small alleviation of the anguish resulting from such a stroke,

to reflect that the time is short, and the end of all things is at hand. Painful as is the thought to all your friends, to you, my dear friend, it must be familiar, that, in all probability, her separation from you will be but of short duration; and that she has entered, a little while before you, into that blessed eternity for which you have long been waiting.

* * * * * *

LXVIII.

TO THE REV. THOMAS GRINFIELD, CLIFTON.

ON HUTCHINSONIANISM.

Leicester, March 4, 1823.

Dear Sir,

I must beg your pardon for not sooner replying to your favour, in which you condescend to inquire my opinion on the subject of Hutchinsonianism. The reason of my delay was my conscious inability to give an opinion entitled to any degree of weight. I have been in the habit of considering Hutchinsonianism as a tissue of fancies, unsupported by reason or scripture; and all that has occurred to me to read on that system, has confirmed that impression. I have attentively perused Parkhurst's Dissertation on the Cherubic Figures in the Temple: it appears to me a most confused and unsatisfactory disquisition; nor is he able to answer, in any tolerable degree, the objection arising from their being represented in the attitude of worshippers. He attempts to get over this by observing, that though the divine persons whom they represent could not without absurdity be represented in the character of worshippers, their symbols might: but this is to me utterly unintelligible. He is evidently much embarrassed with the *four* faces; a most unlikely symbol of a Trinity. I am equally dissatisfied with his notion of the three elements of air, light, and fire, being intended as natural types and symbols of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For this there appears to me not a shadow of proof. The me-

taphors of Scripture afford none whatever; as is evident from this one consideration, that the figurative language of scripture is interpreted as naturally and as easily, without the aid of the Hutchinsonian hypothesis, as with it. What is that sort of typical instruction which never instructed? And where is the people to be found, where the individual, who learned the doctrine of the Trinity from the works of nature? I cannot suppose it would ever have suggested itself to a single mind, had it not been communicated, probably among the earliest revelations of God.

My utter despair of deriving any solid benefit from these speculations, must plead my excuse for not occupying my attention in any attempt to investigate the merits of the system more closely; and I am truly concerned to hear that Mr. B. designs to write upon the subject. I am afraid it will have no other effect than to strengthen existing prejudices against evangelical doctrine.

I am, dear Sir, with much esteem,
Yours most respectfully,
ROBERT HALL.

LXIX.

TO THE REV. ———

IN REPLY TO A REQUEST TO WRITE A REVIEW.

Leicester, Nov. 16, 1823.

My dear Friend,

You have put me on a most irksome task; and were the request to come from almost any other quarter, I should refuse to comply, without a moment's hesitation. I find it difficult to deny you any thing; but, really, you could scarcely have proposed any thing to me more disagreeable. I think very highly of your son's publication; so that my objections arise, in no degree, from that quarter. But, in the first place, I am far from being satisfied of the propriety of suffering the senti-

ments of private friendship to prevail in a review. A reviewer professes to be a literary judge; and his sentence ought to be as unbiassed as that of any magistrate whatever. But what should we think of a judge, who permitted himself to be tampered with by either party concerned, with a view to procure a favourable decision? In the exercise of his censorial office, a reviewer ought to have neither friends nor enemies. It is an adherence to this maxim which can alone secure the dignified impartiality of criticism, or entitle it to the smallest degree of credit. A work like your son's does not need artificial support; and one of an opposite description does not deserve it. Your son should rest calmly on his own merits, with a becoming confidence that an enlightened public will not fail to do him justice. There was never a period in my life when I would have stooped to solicit a review. I speak on the supposition of the application originating with him.

In the next place, when it is known I have complied in this instance, I shall be harassed with innumerable applications. ———, in particular, will have the justest reason to complain: for he has, at different times, most vehemently importuned me to review particular works, which I have steadily refused; and the only method I have found, to shield myself from his importunities, has been to renounce reviewing altogether. I think it probable he would not admit my review; I am sure he ought not, for the reasons I have assigned, and I have laid him under no such obligation as to induce him to depart from the straight-forward path. I do not suppose I could bring myself to speak higher of the work than an impartial reader would do; and what advantage, then, could be derived from my reviewing it? But supposing I did, where would be the justice to the public? You perceive, my dear friend, the difficulties which surround me, and the reasons why, in my humble opinion, the interference of friendship should not be allowed in such cases.

I write altogether in the dark. You have not informed me in what Review you would wish me to write;

nor do I know whether it has been reviewed already. I am not at all in the habit of reading either the Eclectic, or any other Review: indeed, I wish the whole tribe could be put an end to.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

LXX.

TO MR. J. E. RYLAND. (EXTRACT.)

Leicester, 1824.

——— I cannot write but upon some specified subject; and that subject must be something which suggests itself spontaneously to my thoughts. I feel an insuperable repugnance to the bending of my mind to the suggestion of others; it must be free as air, or I cannot move to any purpose: whatever I write must *originate* entirely with myself. Though I have no objection to gaining money, yet my love of it is not sufficiently strong for it to have any sensible influence in directing my literary exertions. There are several subjects which I have revolved in my mind, to which I feel a decided preference; and if I present myself to the public at all, it must be in the discussion of these. As to Pascal, few admire him more than myself: but, in writing an introduction, I should feel myself quite out at sea; I should float, without any determinate direction; my mind would have no determinate object; and, not having a distinct idea of what I wished to do, I should do nothing to any purpose. For elegant and specious declamation, I have no sort of talent. I must have a brief; I must have something like a fixed thesis, some proposition I wish to establish or illustrate, or I feel perfectly cold and indifferent. For my part, I let every man pursue his own plans: how it is that I am doomed to be the perpetual object of advice, admonition, expostulation, &c. &c., as a writer, I know not. I am sure it does not arise from any proofs I have given of superior docility. I know myself so well,

as to be aware that importunities of this kind have always the effect of indisposing me to their object. I should have written *more* had I been urged *less;* and when the public cease to dictate to me, I shall feel myself my own master.

LXXI.

TO MRS. LANGDON,

ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.

Leicester, Oct. 23, 1824.

My dear Madam,

The melancholy intelligence of the death of dear Mr. Langdon has deeply affected me: and most happy should I deem myself were it in my power to administer effectual consolation under such a stroke. I refrained from addressing you immediately, waiting for the first transports of grief to subside; because I well know, that premature attempts to console only irritate the sorrows they are meant to heal. Let me indulge the hope, that by this time reason and religion are come to your aid, and that you are prepared to say with the greatest and most illustrious of sufferers, "Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

The remarkable combination of the most lovely qualities with the most fervent piety, which distinguished the character of our dear friend, while they enhance the sense of your loss, will, I hope, mitigate its bitterness in another view, by assuring you, that "great is his reward in heaven." Death to him is, undoubtedly, "exceeding great gain;" nor would you, in your best moments, wish to draw him down from his elevated abode, to this vale of sorrow and affliction. The stroke was not entirely sudden and unexpected: a long series of attacks and infirmities must, no doubt, have contributed to familiarize your mind to the event. Remember, my dear Madam, that the separation is but for a season; our dear friend is not lost, but preferred to an infinitely higher state,

where he is awaiting your arrival. To me, his removal will long be a source of deep regret; for where shall I find a friend equally amiable, tender, and constant? *

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

I beg to be most affectionately remembered to each of your dear children, earnestly praying that their father's God may be their God. Wishing and praying that you may be favoured with the richest consolations of religion,

I remain, my dearest Madam,

Your affectionate Friend,

ROBERT HALL.

LXXII.

TO J. B. WILLIAMS, ESQ., SHREWSBURY.

Leicester, March 29, 1825.

Dear Sir,

Some apology is necessary for not having sooner acknowledged your very kind present of your new and highly-improved edition of the admirable Philip Henry, whom you have the honour, I find, of enumerating among your ancestors. It is a descent with which you have more reason to be satisfied, than if you could trace your pedigree from the Plantagenets. I waited only until I had time to renew my acquaintance with the Life of that amiable man, and to form an estimate of the improvements it has derived from diligent researches. I have not yet entirely completed the volume; but I am now busy in doing so, and have read enough to satisfy myself of the great obligations you have conferred on the public, by this excellent work. The additional documents and letters, by which you have enriched and enlarged the original narrative, constitute a treasure of wisdom and piety, for which you are entitled to the warm

* Mr. Langdon and Mr. Hall had been fellow-students at Bristol; and ever after cherished for each other the warmest esteem and affection.—ED.

acknowledgements of every christian reader, and especially of every dissenter. May a double portion of his spirit descend on the rising generation of ministers!

The labour and research requisite for furnishing such a repast, must have been great; but not more so, I dare say, than the pleasure you derived from the consciousness of conferring so important a benefit on the public. Permit me to thank you, most sincerely, for the favour you have done me, by the bestowment of so valuable a present. It were highly desirable, that more such biographies of the illustrious dead, improved and enlarged as this, might be given to the public; if it had no other fruit, than to withdraw their attention a little from that farrago of periodical trifles by which the public mind is dissipated, and its taste corrupted.

* * * * * *

I remain, dear Sir,
Your highly obliged Friend and Servant,
ROBERT HALL.

LXXIII.

TO MR. J. E. RYLAND.

Leicester, May 21, 1825.

My dear Sir,

I am extremely concerned to hear the melancholy account your letter contains, of the situation of your dear and honoured father, at the same time that I feel grateful to you for the communication. I had heard previously that he was supposed to be in a declining state; but, little imagining he was so ill, your letter gave me a violent shock. With God all things are possible; and who can tell but the Lord may yet raise him up, and assign him more work to do before he is taken to his eternal reward? It is my earnest wish and prayer, that such may be the result. His loss will be most deeply felt, not only by his afflicted family, but by a very numerous circle of friends, and by the church of God at large. For himself, all is and will be well; nothing can possibly befall

him, but what will be highly to his advantage. A man of a more eminently holy and devoted spirit than that of your dear father, it has never been my lot to witness, and very, very few, who made any approach to him. I feel in the prospect of his removal, much for the family, the academy, and the church. You, my dear Sir, together with your very excellent mother and sisters, will be the objects of a deep and extensive sympathy: but God, whose ways, though mysterious, are always gracious and merciful towards them that fear him, will, I doubt not, sustain and support you under this afflicting stroke, and cause it afterward to work the peaceable fruits of righteousness. His prayers will draw down innumerable blessings on those who were nearest and dearest to him; for who can doubt that the prayers of such a man must avail much? The impression of his example, and the memory of his virtues, will suggest a most powerful motive to constancy, patience, and perseverance, in the ways of God. You will never cease to bless God for having bestowed upon you such a parent. His humility, his meekness, tenderness, devotedness to God, and zeal for the interests of truth and holiness, will long endear him to the christian world, and make his name like the odour of precious ointment. What, in the event of your dear father's removal, will become of the academy and the church? I tremble to think of the consequences: never, surely, could he have been spared with more serious injury to the most important interests! May the eyes of all of us be [turned] to God for his direction and blessing! I should have written to your dear father himself, but feared it might agitate and disturb him. I beg you to remember me to him in the most earnest, respectful, and affectionate terms, and assure him of a deep interest in my feeble prayers. I beg, also, to be most affectionately remembered to your dear mother, sisters, and every part of the family. That the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, may take your dear father under the cover of his wings,—and should he walk through the valley and shadow of death, afford him his rod and his staff,—and that this most affecting

visitation may be sanctified for the eternal benefit of all the parties concerned,—is, my dear Sir, the earnest prayer of

Your most affectionate and sympathizing Friend,

ROBERT HALL.

LXXIV.

TO MR. J. E. RYLAND. (EXTRACT.)

Leicester, May 29, 1825.

——— It gives me much pleasure, but no surprise, to hear that the end of your dear father was emphatically peace. What else, or what less, could be expected from such a life? As he was one of the brightest examples of holiness on earth, no doubt great is his reward in heaven. May it be your happiness, my dear Sir, and mine, to follow, though at a humble distance, so bright a pattern. May we not be slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. I need not repeat how much I feel for your dear mother, and the whole bereaved family. It is, indeed, an irreparable loss; but such is the tenure of all earthly bliss. May we be enabled to lay hold on eternal life.

LXXV.

TO MRS. RYLAND.

ON THE DEATH OF DR. RYLAND.

——— Permit me, my dear Madam, to express the deep sympathy I, in common with innumerable others, feel for you under your irreparable loss. The magnitude of it none can adequately estimate but yourself: but it is consoling to reflect, that you are not called to sorrow as those that have no hope; that, on the contrary, our loss is his unspeakable gain. And the time is short: a very few years will put an end to all our sorrows; and, if we are the Lord's, will reunite us to all those whom we have most loved upon earth.

As you have been highly distinguished by the blessing of possessing such a companion for life, so it is no inconsiderable honour to have contributed so essentially and so long to the felicity of the best of men. All who know you will ever respect you, not only as the relict of Dr. Ryland, but as the distinguished individual who entitled herself to his gratitude by such a series of unremitting attentions and kind offices (the remembrance of which must be a source of melancholy pleasure) as will doubtless draw down a blessing from Him to whom he was dear. It is my earnest prayer, that the God who reveals himself as the father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow, may take you under his especial protection, and supply you with those rich and ineffable consolations which are neither few nor small. We have the word of Him that cannot lie, to assure us that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God." That you may feel more of his sustaining hand, and of his blissful presence, is, dear Madam, the earnest prayer of

Your affectionate and sympathizing Friend,
ROBERT HALL.

LXXVI.

TO MR. ARTHUR TOZER,* BRISTOL.

IN REFERENCE TO MR. HALL'S REMOVAL TO BROADMEAD.

Leicester, July 19, 1825.

My dear Friend,

I am very sorry your kind letters have remained unanswered so long: it was the consequence of their arriving while I was absent from home. I did not arrive at Leicester till last Saturday, having stayed at Kettering, in order to preach for the mission, which I did morning and evening.

The letters from you ought, in all reason, to have been sent forward; but this was impracticable, because my

* Mr. Tozer was one of the deacons of the church at Broadmead.

whole family were, at the same time, on an excursion for their health. I hope you will be so good as to accept this as a sufficient apology for my apparent neglect. Had I been guilty of any voluntary one, towards a friend whom I so highly esteem, I should never forgive myself.

It is impossible for me to hear the favourable opinion which you and the rest of my friends entertain of me, without being deeply sensible of their kindness. I feel myself most unworthy of such an expression of their regard; the consciousness of which, while it enhances my gratitude, impairs my pleasure. Could I see my way clear to leave Leicester, I should still tremble at the thought of being placed in a situation in which I must necessarily sustain a comparison with your late beloved and lamented pastor.

In an affair of so much magnitude, I should wish to avoid whatever might wear the appearance of precipitance; and, on that account, should the church at Broadmead see fit to give me an invitation to the pastoral office, I should wish to be allowed some time, before I give a decisive answer. On some very obvious accounts, I should prefer Bristol, perhaps, to any other situation; and the state of the church at Leicester is far from being precisely as I could wish. Still the aspect of things is brightening; the clouds, I trust, are beginning to disperse; and an important step has already been taken towards the restoration of mutual confidence and affection. I feel at present inclined to believe it is my duty to stay at Leicester. I wish most earnestly to be directed from above, and that the few remaining years of my life (if any are allotted me) may be passed where they may best subserve the best of causes. I am not at all given to change: I have long fixed it in my mind that it was the design of heaven that I shall finish my days here; and, had nothing occurred to disturb our tranquillity, I should not have indulged a thought to the contrary. I do most earnestly bespeak an interest in your prayers, that my way may be directed of the Lord; and that "for me to live may be Christ and to die gain."

Pecuniary considerations, as you suspect, will have

little influence in guiding my determination. I beg to be most affectionately remembered to all inquiring friends, and remain, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.

LXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Leicester, August 11, 1825.

My very dear Friend,

I should have sooner written to you, but on two accounts: first, the almost ceaseless interruptions I have met with since my return from London, which have kept me in a perpetual hurry; and, second, my inability, even at present, to give you the satisfaction you wish by a decisive answer. Sensible, as I deeply am, of the unmerited tokens of respect shown me by my Bristol friends, and solicitous, if possible, to comply with all their wishes, I still feel difficulties in the way, which I know not how to surmount. The church at Leicester is much agitated on the occasion, and have evinced great unanimity in their resolution to adopt the speediest and most effectual measures, in order to remove the principal source of my uneasiness. There appears to be but one feeling pervading the church and congregation. What success may attend their efforts to restore peace, God only knows; but, should they be successful, I shall find it very difficult to separate myself from them. To inflict the pain it would occasion to many excellent persons and kind friends, would cost me a conflict for which I feel myself little prepared. In truth, the motives for staying in my present situation, and the motives for relinquishing it, are so equally balanced, that I am kept still in a state of suspense; and am habitually under some apprehension, that, whatever choice I make, I shall be apt to repent not having made an opposite one. It is certainly a humbling

consideration not to be able to come to a speedier decision; but I feel the weight of the affair, and that the consequences of it, both to myself and others, will probably be greater than can result from any future step in my life. I earnestly implore an interest in your prayers, that the Lord would be pleased to direct me, and that, wherever the bounds of my habitation may be fixed, "Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by my life or my death." The greatest annoyance of my life, for some years past, has arisen from not being able to command my time, particularly in the morning; and could I be assured of my possessing this inestimable privilege, the poorest and most neglected village would possess irresistible charms for me. The afternoon and evening I have always been willing to abandon to the use of others; but to have no time I can call my own,—to be liable to have the most precious hours of reading and meditation snatched from me,—is an evil, to one of my temperament, almost insupportable. Now, I greatly fear this evil would be increased at Bristol. One advantage I should enjoy at Bristol (the want of which I severely feel here) is, access to books; but what will this avail me, if I have no time to read them?

I have carefully inspected the documents relating to Terril's deeds, brought by Messrs. Sherring and Phillips. It is my decided opinion, that the pastor of Broadmead is under no obligation to prepare young men for the ministry, unless they are *presented* to him for that purpose; a thing most unlikely to happen, when such ample means of education are already provided. Should it occur, however, he has only to make his election, either to comply with the demand, or to relinquish his interest in the establishment. As to the fear of incurring penalties, it is too ridiculous to be thought of. All this, however, I most cheerfully leave to the determination of the trustees; for if ever I was sincere in any thing, it is when I declare, that pecuniary considerations will have no influence in my decision. To *deteriorate* my situation would be injustice to my family: beyond that, I have no solicitude. I beg to be most affectionately remembered

to Mr. James and my sisters, and all friends, as if named. I remain, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

Robert Hall.

LXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Leicester, Oct. 3, 1825.

My very dear Friend,

I am as much ashamed as any of my friends can be, to keep them so long in suspense respecting my determination in regard to removing to Bristol. I feel it to be of so much importance to my own happiness, and in the relation it bears to the spiritual interests of a large body of people, both here and at Bristol, that I tremble at the thought of coming to a final decision. My inclination, I confess, stands towards Bristol. The reasons are obvious: two sisters, justly dear to me, residing there; a place dear to me from ancient recollections, and from the most enchanting scenery; access to books, a want which I most grievously feel here; many old friends, or the families of old friends, whom I much love and esteem; a superior description of society; and, I may add, equal, if not superior, prospects of usefulness. These, it must be acknowledged, are weighty considerations, and I feel them in their full force, insomuch that I feel myself incapable of relinquishing the thought of Bristol without a pang. On the other hand, I most sensibly feel the difficulty of leaving a people who are most affectionately attached, and a congregation which I have, through mercy, been the instrument of raising from a very low to a very flourishing state. The certainty of giving great uneasiness to many excellent and worthy friends, and of being accessary to the injury of an interest which ought ever to be dear to me, presses much upon my mind; it is, indeed, the grand difficulty I feel in the way of leaving Leicester. I tremble at the thought of destroying what I have been the means of building up.

I tremble at the thought of rushing into a sphere of action, to which I am not called, and, it may be, of offending God by deserting my proper post. As it is the *last* remove, in all probability, I shall ever be tempted to make before I am conveyed to the "house appointed for all living," I feel extremely anxious that it may be made with the divine approbation, conscious that my times are in the Lord's hands. I desire most sincerely to acknowledge him in all my ways. O that I might hear a voice behind me, saying, "This is the way, walk thou in it!" My mind is much perplexed, my resolution not decided. I feel a conflict between opposite motives, and am drawn by contrary attractions; though, were I to consult my inclinations alone, I should certainly decide for Bristol: my advanced period of life, and the apprehension of its possible, if not probable effects on the interests of religion, form the grand objections. One thing I must beg leave to mention, that, were I to settle with you, I should decline taking any share in the monthly lecture. In the united prayer-meeting I should engage with pleasure. I have but little opinion of the utility of the first of those meetings.

On the whole, I must request *one* month more, and at the end of that time (if my life is spared), you may reckon upon my giving you a decisive answer. During that interval I will again seek divine guidance, and I humbly hope I shall receive it. At all events, I will not keep you longer in suspense, and am truly concerned at having exercised your patience so long.

I beg to be most affectionately remembered to Mr. Holden, and thank him sincerely for his kind letter. My best regards await all inquiring friends. My love to dear Mr. and Mrs. James, and my sister.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.

LXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Leicester, Dec. 6, 1825.

My dear Friend,

I have just time at present to inform you, that I have come to a determination to accept the invitation the church and congregation of Broadmead have thought fit to give me, on the following terms: that I make trial of the situation for *one year*, and that at the termination of it, if it should not answer our mutual purposes, each party, *i. e.* the church and myself, shall be at liberty to separate. I do not say this from the smallest desire that the union may not be permanent; I earnestly hope and pray that it may; but futurities are in the hand of God; and if the change of situation should be found materially to affect my health, which at my stage of existence is equivalent to life,—or if the ends we propose are not answered,—I may be at liberty, after a fair trial, to dissolve the connexion, without incurring the charge of levity or inconstancy. If I shall be spared to come, it will be with the hope and intention of living and dying among you, nor shall I cherish any expectation of change; but imperious reasons, connected with my happiness and usefulness, may arise to determine me to the contrary, of which I shall probably be able by that time to form a judgement.

I write this in haste, as I expect Mr. Daniell every moment, who is setting out at two o'clock. I shall address a letter to the church in a few days; I purpose to direct it to you; when you will be so good as to forward it, or read it to the church. I have only one thing to request, and that is of great importance; that you will grant me an interest in your prayers, that my way may be prospered, that I may be kept from falling, and that my removal to Bristol may be instrumental to the conversion of sinners, and to the building up the church in faith and holiness. Let me beg you, my dear and honoured friend, not to forget me at a throne of grace. My assu-

rance of this on your part, and on the part of my friends in general, would add unspeakably to the comfort of,

My dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.

P. S. I beg my love to Mr. and Mrs. James, and sister Mary. Kind remembrances to all friends.

LXXX.

TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ASSEMBLING IN BROADMEAD, BRISTOL.

ON ACCEPTING THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

Leicester, Dec. 21, 1825.

My dear Brethren,

After long and mature deliberation and earnest prayer, I write these lines to inform you that I accept the invitation you have been pleased to give me to the pastoral office. That it may become a mutual blessing, and that you and myself may reap the fruit of it, in the glory of God, the spiritual improvement of each other, and the conversion of sinners from the error of their way, will I trust continue to be, as it has already been, the object of your frequent and fervent supplication to the throne of grace. Be assured I feel deeply my utter inability for the adequate discharge of the weighty duties which devolve upon me, and particularly my unfitness to walk in the steps of your late venerable pastor. My only hope, amidst the discouragement arising from this quarter, is placed in "your prayers, and the supply of the spirit of Christ Jesus." Conscious as I am of innumerable imperfections, I must rely on your candour for a favourable construction of my conduct, and reception of my labours. Permit me, my dear brethren, to conclude, by "recommending you to God, and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified by the faith of Jesus."

I remain, dear Brethren,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.

LXXXI.

TO THE REV. P. J. SAFFERY, OF SALISBURY.

Leicester, Jan. 16, 1826.

Dear Sir,

I duly received your favour, and cannot be insensible to the honour you have done me, in wishing me to assist at your approaching ordination by delivering a charge. I am sorry you appear to lay so much stress upon it, because it makes me the more uneasy in putting that negative on your wishes which my judgement and my inclination dictate. As I intend to avoid engagements out of Bristol as much as possible, and very rarely, if ever, to officiate at ordinations, I can by no means consent to begin my career there by an engagement of that nature, which would at once, by giving erroneous expectations, be productive of much inconvenience. Nearly all the spare time I can command from my proper station will necessarily be occupied in visiting the connexions among which I have lived, and where I have numerous old and tried friends, who must be ever dear to my heart. As to ordinations, it has long been my opinion that they are best conducted by the presbyters or elders of the immediate vicinity of the party; and that to step beyond that circle is to sacrifice or impair the chief benefit of that practice, which is the putting a wholesome check on the abuse of the popular suffrage, by making it impossible for a minister to establish himself at the head of a congregation, without the approbation and sanction of the circle of pastors with whom he is to act. It is an affair in which the church are chiefly or solely concerned; and though the calling in a stranger on such occasions may attract a greater audience, it is, in my humble opinion, at the expense of more important objects. For these, and other reasons that might be adduced, you must allow me *firmly*, though most respectfully, to decline the service you have been pleased to assign me; and, to cut off any occasion of [discussion], I must request the favour of [your] accepting this reply as *final*.

I cannot close these lines, however, without expressing the pleasure it affords me to find you are likely to succeed your excellent father. That a double portion of his spirit may rest upon you, is, dear Sir, the sincere desire and prayer of

Your sincere Friend and humble Servant,
ROBERT HALL.

P. S. I beg to be respectfully remembered to your excellent mother, though personally unknown.

LXXXII.

TO THE REV. DR. J. P. SMITH, HOMERTON.

Bristol, Nov. 3, 1826.

Rev. and dear Sir,

I have to complain of a good deal of misrepresentation in what is stated in your letter, as having passed in my interview with Dr. Malan. The conversations (for they were two) passed at my house, not at Clifton. He was insisting much on the absolute necessity of the full assurance of our personal salvation, which, as he appeared to carry it to a great extent, led me to remark, that it seemed to me a most desirable attainment, and what every sincere christian ought to seek after with diligence, rather than as essential to the very [existence] of religion; and in the course of conversation I confessed that I had it not myself. At this he expressed his surprise, and began with emphasis to recite that passage in John's epistle, "He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." His discourse to me on this subject was not satisfactory. Part of it was not very intelligible; and part, as far as I did understand it, was injudicious, and bordering on enthusiasm. I certainly was extremely struck with the indications of exalted piety and love exhibited by his whole deportment, and particularly his countenance. I must confess there was something in his looks that reminded me more of the ideal picture I have formed of the Saviour, than I ever saw before in

any human being; and, as I am too prone to express myself in the style of hyperbole, it is to that part of his character that the expression your letter quoted must be understood to allude. Though I am certain I never used some of the words imputed to me, particularly those in which I am represented as saying, "All other men were brutes and beasts compared to him." I am equally a stranger to the words and the ideas, you may depend on it. I never acknowledged the little success of my sermons arose from my ministry not being accompanied with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He observed, that my printed discourses (of these only he spoke) wanted simplicity: nor was I at all concerned or surprised at that; for he found much fault with Maclaurin's, on "Glorying in the Cross of Christ," which he accused of the same defect, observing, that it exhibited the truth, but did not exhibit his Master; a remark which appeared to me (as I observed to him) very unintelligible. I never gave thanks aloud, that Dr. Malan was brought to Bristol; nothing of the kind ever passed from me. I probably did (indeed, I know I did,) express myself much gratified in having an opportunity of a personal interview; and I parted from him with much esteem and affection on my part. I thought him, on the whole, a very extraordinary man; though much more to be admired for his ardent piety and lively imagination, than for judgement or profundity. Even on his favourite topic of assurance he seemed sometimes to retract all that he had asserted. I did not hear him [preach]; but I learnt afterwards, that his hearers generally went away with the impression of their having heard very new doctrine. If Dr. Malan has given the statement you have copied, I am heartily sorry for it, because it is *extremely* inaccurate, and must necessarily diminish the high regard in which I held him. Thus I have given you, my dear Sir, a brief outline of what passed; and most earnestly wish you every degree of success in your labours to maintain the truth as it is in Jesus.

I am, dear and Rev. Sir,

With very high esteem, your affectionate Friend,

ROBERT HALL.

N. B.—Permit me to return my most sincere thanks for your admirable defence of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, against Belsham: it will benefit the church, I trust, as long as the English language lasts.

LXXXIII.

TO W. B. GURNEY, ESQ.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. GURNEY.

Bristol, August 25, 1827.

My dear Friend,

It is a very few days since I heard the very melancholy intelligence of the removal of dear Mrs. Gurney; and I was not willing to obtrude on the sacred privacy of grief till its first agitation was in some measure subsided. Most *deeply* is this stroke felt, and long will continue to be so, by that very large circle of which she was the ornament and delight; but how much more severe the stroke on him who was united to her by the tenderest of earthly ties! To me the information was like a thunderclap: it was so sudden and so unexpected, that I could scarcely persuade myself it was a reality; it seems now like one of those frightful visions of the night which vanish at the return of dawn.

Alas! how fresh in my mind is the figure of the dear deceased, presiding in the social circle with that inimitable ease, elegance, and grace, which captivated every heart:—changed now, and clouded for ever with the shades of death! Never was a victim snatched by the great destroyer, more beloved, or more lamented.

But why should I dwell on what is so distressing to remember, rather than advert to the brighter side of this melancholy picture? You, my dear friend, have lost the richest of earthly blessings in a most admirable and amiable wife; but grace has completed its triumph in adding to the celestial choir one more spirit of "the just made perfect." Bright as she shone in her earthly sphere, her light was dim and obscure, compared to that which

now invests her. Her pure and celestial spirit has ascended to its native seat, where she "bears the name of her God on her forehead, and serves him day and night in his temple." Your loss, my dear friend, is her unspeakable gain; and your mind is too generous, in your calmest moments, to wish her hurled from her celestial elevation. Let a few more months and years revolve, and you will be reunited, to part no more; the days of your mourning will be ended; the Lord will be to you (as he is already to the dear deceased) "your everlasting light, and your God your glory."

I hope you will not suffer the excess of grief so to absorb your mind as to shut out the consolations of piety, or the claims of duty. It is my earnest prayer that God himself may comfort you, and that he may be pleased so to sanctify this most heavy trial, that, though "faint," you may be "still pursuing;" and that, though you "sow in tears," you may "reap in joy."

I beg to be most affectionately remembered to every branch of your family, as well as to all inquiring friends; and remain, with deep concern,

Your affectionate and sympathizing Friend,

ROBERT HALL.

LXXXIV.

TO EBENEZER FOSTER, ESQ.

Bristol, Jan. 29, 1829.

My dear Sir,

I safely received your favour of the 20th instant. It gives me great pleasure to infer, from your letter, that the health of your family, and particularly of your elder brother, is in a tolerable state.

The death of Mrs. —— must have been felt very severely by your excellent consort, to whom I beg to express a deep and sincere sympathy. I was greatly affected when I heard of it, and shall ever carry with me a grateful and affectionate sense of the uniform kindness with which she treated me, as well as of the many amiable

and interesting traits of her character. It would have given me pleasure to have been informed what were her views and feelings in the prospect of eternity: I hope she exhibited that state of mind, on the approach of that awful crisis, which must prevent surviving friends from "sorrowing as those who have no hope." I have lately heard, with much concern, of the alarming illness of my dear friend [Nutter ?];—but have rejoiced to learn subsequently, that considerable hopes are entertained of his recovery. While events of this nature present a striking commentary on the solemn declaration that "all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the field." it is consoling to remember that "the word of the Lord endureth for ever;" and that, by the preaching of the gospel, it is more extensively promulgated than ever.

The intelligence you have just given me of the rapid extension of evangelical religion in Cambridge, is highly gratifying; nor can I entertain any serious apprehension of ultimate injury resulting from thence to the dissenting interest. If something like competition should have the effect of giving increased momentum to the exertions of both parties, the public may be benefitted, and both improved.

With respect to my health, I can say little that I could wish to say. Some small abatement of the violence and frequency of my old complaint has, I think, of late, been experienced: but it is very inconsiderable; and the last night it prevented me getting a wink of sleep until after seven o'clock this morning. On this account, I can speak with no sort of confidence of my intended visit to Cambridge, further than this, that I feel a most *anxious* desire of enjoying it, and that nothing but absolute necessity will prevent me from making the attempt; and, as travelling on the outside is much the easiest to me, it will not be prudent to undertake it till the summer is tolerably advanced. I have little intelligence to communicate worthy of your attention. I continue to be very happy with my people, from whom I daily receive every demonstration of affection and respect. Our attendance is as good as I could wish; and we have added to the *Baptist*

Church,* during the last year, twenty-seven, and six are standing candidates for baptism. For these tokens of divine presence I desire to be thankful. Mrs. Hall and my family are, through mercy, as well as usual; and join with me in most affectionate regards to every branch of your family, and to the Cambridge circle of friends in general. I beg to be most affectionately remembered to dear Mr. ——, and to assure him of my deep sympathy with him under his heavy and irreparable loss. It is my fervent and sincere prayer it may be sanctified.

I remain, my dear Sir,
Your obliged and affectionate Friend,
ROBERT HALL.

LXXXV.

TO JAMES NUTTER, ESQ., SHELFORD, NEAR CAMBRIDGE.

Bristol, Feb. 16, 1829.

My very dear Friend,

I heard with much concern of your late alarming illness, and, with a proportionate degree of joy, of your partial recovery, and of the pleasing prospect presented of your yet surviving for years, to be a blessing to your family and connexions. It grieves me much to learn from Mr. Price, that you have experienced something like a relapse, and that your situation is considered still critical and precarious. However the Lord may dispose of you, (though it is my earnest prayer that your days may be prolonged to a distant period,) I cannot adequately express my satisfaction at finding you are favoured with such an experience of the consolations of religion, as to enable you to comfort your sorrowing friends, and to bear so glorious a testimony to the power and grace of the

* To render this phrase intelligible to some readers, it may be proper to observe, that in the congregation at Broadmead there are two classes of persons who are associated in church-fellowship: one consists of those only who have been baptized in adult age, on a confession of faith; while the other consists jointly of such and of pedobaptists. The former are "strict communion baptists," and constitute *the baptist church:* the latter furnish an example of "mixed communion."—ED.

Redeemer. O, my dear friend, how precious is a merciful Saviour in the eyes of a dying sinner! When the heart and flesh fail, he can adopt the triumphant language of Simeon, and say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." You will never, my dear friend, to all eternity, be able sufficiently to magnify the riches of divine grace, in adopting you into the family of the Redeemer, and making you "an heir of glory."

I earnestly hope the spectacle they have witnessed will have a most beneficial effect upon the younger branches of your family, in confirming pious resolutions, and convincing of the emptiness, the nothingness, of all which the world admires, compared to an interest in Christ, and a preparation for heaven. In the prospect of life there are *many* things which are adapted to animate and support; in the near approach of death, there is but "the hope of glory." It is my earnest prayer, that this hope may shed its brightest beams on the mind of my dear and highly esteemed friend. As to myself, my health is in such a state that I can say nothing of the future: but your wishes will be with me so far a law, that, if my complaint will permit me during the early part of the summer, I shall accede to Mr. Price's request, by officiating at the opening of the meeting-house.*

* * * * *

Earnestly praying that every blessing may be communicated to you, which a covenant God has to bestow, I remain,

Your most affectionate Friend and Brother,

ROBERT HALL.†

* Mr. Price married a daughter of Mr. Nutter.

† This letter did not reach Shelford until the day after the death of the excellent individual to whom it was addressed.—ED.

LXXXVI.

TO EBENEZER FOSTER, ESQ., CAMBRIDGE.

Bristol, Feb. 5, 1831.

My dear Sir,

I acknowledge not sooner answering yours.

* * * * * *

I have little or no intelligence to communicate, farther than that our city is much agitated by political discussion and the strife of parties. A meeting was lately held of the friends of reform, to petition on its behalf; but it was most stormy and tempestuous. Though all concurred in the general object, violent disputes arose on minor points, which distracted the discussion, and rendered it a scene of tumult and uproar. Such, of late, has been the general character of public meetings at Bristol. For my part, I never attend them. Indeed, the complaint in my back renders it impossible for me to stand; and to lie down would neither be decent nor practicable.

Conversation is almost entirely occupied by the all-absorbing theme of politics; nor is it to be wondered at, when we consider the equivocal and anomalous state of this and of almost all other countries. Some great crisis appears to be approaching, which will probably shake Europe to its centre, and produce some entire new order of things. Shall we ultimately escape a war? I have great confidence in the pacific views of our present ministry, but less in their continuing in power; nor do I perceive what measures they can adopt, that will materially alleviate the distress of the lower orders; and, unless this can be done, a [great convulsion] is, I fear, inevitable. At all events, one great source of consolation remains: "the Lord reigneth; and blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

By the way, it gives me pleasure to find that attempts are making in London to dissolve the union between the orthodox and the socinian [dissenters.] I most heartily wish them success.* It is a most unnatural and prepos-

* Mr. Hall here alludes to the union of what are called the "three denominations" of dissenters. This union (which, however, is never

terous union, and tends, above any thing else, to give an imposing air of importance to the socinian [party], which, but for this coalition, would sink into insignificance. It is odious in the eyes of pious churchmen, and tends to throw a disguise over the real state of the dissenters, in relation to their religious tenets. But I must close, and am afraid I have already occupied too much of your valuable time.

Mrs. Hall and my family are in tolerable health, and desire to unite with me in most affectionate regards to you and your family, and to your dear brother and his family, Mr. —— and his lady, &c. &c. I would just add, that I [derived] considerable benefit, in relation to the determination of blood to the lungs, [from] my visit to Cheltenham.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your most affectionate and obliged Friend,

Robert Hall.*

pretended to be religious) commenced at a time when the Presbyterians, most of whom are now Arians, or Socinians, were almost universally Calvinists. Some persons have supposed, on account of Mr. Hall's strong language in this case, that he would have joined those who wish to exclude all but the orthodox from the British and Foreign Bible Society, and have aimed to introduce an extra-scriptural phrase as a bond of union in a benevolent institution. But they who have thus fancied, neither duly meditate upon the essential difference of the two cases, nor upon Mr. Hall's principles of action with regard to the Bible Society, so forcibly depicted in his speech delivered at the second Anniversary Meeting of the Leicester Auxiliary Bible Society. See Vol. IV. —Ed.

* This letter was written only four days before Mr. Hall's last illness, and sixteen before his death.—Ed.

[illegible]

ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION:

THE

CIRCULAR LETTER

FROM THE

MINISTERS AND MESSENGERS OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES

OF THE

Western Association.

[WRITTEN IN 1787.]

THE EXCELLENCY

OF

THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

Dear Brethren,

We are happy to be able to address you on the present occasion. We have many and great thanks to render to our common God and Father, for preserving us through another year, and permitting us once more to assemble ourselves together. We have too often experienced your candour and good will to doubt of your bearing with us, whilst we exhort you with all earnestness and sincerity.

You will remember, brethren, the dignity of the dispensation under which you live; that it is not the institution of man, but the wise and gracious plan of God to make you happy. With this view he raised up the people of the Jews, kept them distinct from all others, and gave them such a portion of knowledge as might, in due time, prepare for the display of the gospel. With this view, a succession of priests was kept up, the eye of prophecy was enlightened, and the hand of Omnipotence stretched forth. After thus preparing the way, our great Redeemer himself appeared upon the earth, lived in humiliation and sorrow, and died in agony and disgrace. During the time of his personal ministry, he had every attestation of Deity in his favour, and the power of God was often exerted in a most signal manner. After his ascension, a larger measure of knowledge and power was given to his disciples than had been afforded them before. They asserted his character, and affirmed that he had

risen from the dead, in the very place in which he had been crucified. They were endued with a miraculous skill in tongues, for the very purpose of spreading the gospel through the different parts of the world; and with what success they did it, and how, in the face of danger and of death, they maintained their cause, whilst many of them perished in their sufferings, is well known, and will draw tears of admiration and gratitude from all succeeding ages.

When we see the Saviour descending from heaven as a witness for God, and behold his sufferings and death, we cannot help being astonished at so stupendous a scene, and inquiring into the purpose it was intended to accomplish. One, among many other great ends which are answered by it, is the removing the ignorance and error in which we are by nature involved, and giving us the knowledge of God, and our true happiness. If there be a moral Governor of the world, it must be of great importance to know upon what terms we stand with him, and what expectations we may form from him. A sober, reflecting man could scarcely feel himself at ease, till he attained to some certainty in points of so much consequence; and yet how little information we can derive from reason in inquiries of this nature, may be seen from the experience of past ages, and those the most enlightened and refined; which, after all their researches, have not been able to come to any agreement, or to gain any satisfaction. We may discover, by the light of nature, the existence of a being who is possessed of all possible perfection. The works of God sufficiently display his goodness, wisdom, and power; but with respect to the application of these, in any particular instance, it leaves us entirely at a loss. We have no measure which we can apply to the operations of an infinite mind; and, therefore, though we may be assured that the Divine Being possesses all the attributes which compose supreme excellence, it is impossible for us to say, in particular instances, what path of conduct may best consist with those perfections, in their most extensive operation. Indeed, to discover not only the leading attributes of the

Divine Nature, but to be acquainted beforehand with every direction they will take, would be fully to comprehend the Most High. When, therefore, without the aid of revelation, we attempt to foretell the dispensations of the Almighty, we are lost in a maze, and are obliged to rest in vague and uncertain conjectures. This holds true, more especially, when applied to the conduct of Providence with respect to only a small part of creation. In this case our uncertainty is doubled, since we know that all the works of God form one vast system, and that the regulation of the parts must be subservient to the administration of the whole. But this situation is ours. Confined to a point in our existence, and limited in our ideas, we cannot tell what relation we bear to other beings, or how it may seem fit to Divine Providence to dispose of us, in relation to those higher and more ultimate designs which are continually carrying on. Our meaning may be illustrated by the following instance :—It is certain that the Divine Being is, in the greatest degree, compassionate and good; but, if a number of creatures render themselves unhappy by a wilful rebellion against him, a singular instance would arise. It would be impossible to say whether the exercise of compassion *here* would best comport with the highest goodness, and the greatest happiness, in the general administration of Providence, because no one could trace every relation which the parts bear to the whole.

This you will perceive is a case entirely to the point; for disorder and sin *have* entered into the world. It is evident, things are turned out of their natural and original channel—that they are not what they *have* been, nor what they *ought* to be. Men have corrupted their way. A change so singular in the creation—a situation so striking, and so little to be apprehended under the government of a holy and perfect Being, naturally leads us to look for a revolution in the dispensations of Providence. In such a state, some new and awful interposition of the Divine hand might well be expected. There is something, at the same time, in the idea of having provoked the displeasure of God, when seriously thought of,

too heavy for the heart of man to bear. We cannot leave his presence, we cannot resist his power, we cannot evade his stroke. Hence mankind, in all ages, have had their fears awakened, and have taken a gloomy survey of an hereafter. They saw death busy around them, carrying their fellow-creatures out of their sight. Anxious and fearful for themselves, they sought for them in the dreams of poetic illusion, and followed them in the gloomy visions of unenlightened fancy. They found that life was filled with vanity and sorrow; they knew not but death would extinguish their existence, or transmit them to still greater misery. They had just light enough dimly to show them the Judge of the universe seated on his throne, in wrath, clouded with darkness, and beset with judgements. They had no certain access to him—no acceptable worship to pay him—no assurance that their prayers would be answered, or their sins forgiven them. They saw not the issue of things, nor could they take any lengthened view of futurity. They knew not, therefore, how to cherish any great hopes, to form any high and extensive plans: they were confined to the present moment, and all beyond it was covered with confusion and horror. You will not, my brethren, think this description overwrought, if you read the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Herein, then, appears the supreme excellence of the christian dispensation. In the midst of this darkness, it rises like the sun in its strength, and all these gloomy shades melt away, and are lost in the brightness of it. It no longer leaves us to the conjectures of reason, which has always erred, nor to the fluctuating opinions of men; but all it declares it confirms by the authority of God. The truths it discovers were proclaimed by the Son of God himself, who lay in the bosom of his Father from eternity, who was acquainted with all his counsels, and created all his works. It raises no hopes within, but what are built upon the promise and oath of Him who cannot lie. In the mystery of Christ's incarnation, who was God as well as man, in the humiliation of his life, and in his death upon the cross, we behold the most stu-

pendous instance of compassion; whilst, at the same moment, the law of God received more honour than it could have done by the obedience and death of any, or of all his creatures. *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* In this dispensation of his grace, he has reached so far beyond our highest hopes, that, if we love him, we may be assured that he will freely with it give us all things. Access to God is now opened at all times, and from all places; and to such as sincerely ask it, he has promised his Spirit to teach them to pray, and to help their infirmities. The sacrifice of Christ has rendered it just for him to forgive sin; and whenever we are led to repent of, and to forsake it, even the *righteousness* of God is declared in the pardon of it. Dear brethren, consolation pours itself in on every side, whilst we contemplate the gospel, and refreshes our inmost souls. It gives us the prospect of our sins being pardoned—our prayers accepted—our very afflictions turned into blessings—and our existence prolonged to an endless duration. We see christianity indeed, as yet, but in its infancy. It has not already reached the great ends it is intended to answer, and to which it is constantly advancing. At present it is but as *a grain of mustard seed*, and seems to bring forth a tender and weakly crop; but, be assured, it is of God's own right-hand planting, and he will never suffer it to perish. It will soon stretch its branches to the river, and its shade to the ends of the earth. The weary will repose themselves under it; the hungry will partake of its fruits; and its leaves will be for the healing of the nations.

You, dear brethren, who profess the name of Jesus, will delight in contemplating the increase and grandeur of his kingdom, and your expectations will not deceive you. *He must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.* The religion of Jesus is not the religion of one age, or of one nation. It is a train of light first put in motion by God, and which will continue to move and to spread, till it has filled the whole earth with its glory. Its blessings will descend, and its influence will

be felt to the latest generations. Uninterrupted in its course, and boundless in its extent, it will not be limited by time or space. The earth is too narrow for the display of its effects, and the accomplishment of its purposes. It points forward to an eternity. The great Redeemer will again appear upon the earth as the Judge and Ruler of it; will send forth his angels, and gather his elect from the four winds; will abolish sin, and death, and hell, and will place the righteous for ever in the presence of his God and their God, of his Father and their Father. If such be our religion, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? You are conscious that a mere belief of the christian revelation will not purify the heart, or regulate the conduct. We may calmly assent to the most interesting and solemn truths of christianity, and afterwards suffer them to slide out of our minds, without leaving any impression behind them. If we look back upon the usual course of our feelings, we shall find that we are more influenced by the frequent recurrence of objects than by their weight and importance; and that habit has more force in forming our characters than our opinions have. The mind naturally takes its tone and complexion from what it habitually contemplates. Hence it is that the world, by continually pressing upon our senses, and being ever open to our view, takes so wide a sway in the heart. How think you, my dear brethren, must we correct this influence, and by faith overcome the world, unless we habitually turn our attention to religion and eternity? Let us beseech you, then, to make them familiar with your minds, and mingle them with the ordinary stream of your thoughts: retiring often from the world, and conversing with God and your own souls. In these solemn moments, nature, and the shifting scenes of it, will retire from your view, and you will feel yourselves left alone with God; you will walk as in his sight; you will stand, as it were, at his tribunal. Illusions will then vanish apace, and every thing will appear in its true proportion and proper colour. You will estimate human life, and the worth of it, not by fleeting and momentary

sensations, but by the light of serious reflection and steady faith. You will see little in the past to please, or in the future to flatter; its feverish dreams will subside, and its enchantment be dissolved. It is much, however, if faith do not, upon such occasions, draw aside the veil which rests on futurity, and cut short the interval of expectation. How often has she borne aloft the spirits of good men, and given them a vision of better days and brighter hopes! They have entered already the rest which remained for them; they have *come to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to God, the Judge of all.* From these seasons of retirement and religious meditation, you will return to the active scenes of life with greater advantage. From the presence of God you will come forth with your passions more composed, your thoughts better regulated, and your hearts more steady and pure. Do not imagine that the benefit of such exercises is confined to the moments which are spent in them; for as the air retains the smell, and is filled with the fragrance of leaves which have been long shed, so will these meditations leave a sweet and refreshing influence behind them.

If your religion be genuine, it will be often the source of the warmest and most interesting feelings. It will be a spring of consolation within, which will often be full and pour itself forth. If the gospel has not taken a share in the feelings of our hearts, if it has not moved the great springs of our hopes and fears, we may be assured we have never experienced its force. It is filled with such views as cannot fail to interest and transport us. Besides, if we do not feel the gospel as well as believe it, how can it support against the overwhelming influence of what we *do* feel? The world steals upon us, and engages our affections on all sides. Its prospects enrapture, and its pleasures are seducing us. Will a religion which rests only upon opinion, and a conviction, at times extorted from us, keep us firm against those assaults, and stem the force of a torrent which never ceases to flow? This can be done only by opposing hope to hope, feeling to feeling, and pleasure to pleasure.

Perhaps one of the chief reasons why Christianity does not more purify our hearts is, that we are apt to confine it to seasons of worship, and to shut it out from the ordinary concerns of life. It is a great and fatal mistake to imagine them so separate that we can innocently and usefully engage in the one, without any regard had to the other. Our temporal affairs should never, indeed, be suffered to mingle with the exercises of religion; but religion should always regulate the conduct of our temporal affairs. The reason of this is obvious. *The world and the fashion of it is passing away*, and our union with it will soon be dissolved; whilst the relation which we bear to God, and to eternity, is ever the same, and extends to all times, and to all places. The character which, as Christians, we sustain, is our high character; and the hopes which, as such, we indulge, are our high hopes. It is but reasonable, it is but just, therefore, that a desire of discharging the one, and attaining the other, should sway the *whole* of our conduct. Perhaps you will be ready to think that this advice is impracticable. You will urge the necessity of attending to your worldly callings, which, you will say, cannot be carried on, unless you give them the greater part of your time and attention. Be it so. Remember, we do not advise you to spend more of your *time* in religion than in your ordinary concerns. This would extinguish all human industry. But, if you be sincere in your profession of religion, you will regulate your pursuits by it, and engage no further in any of them than is consistent with the spirit of it. In the midst of all your other concerns, you will still make religion the centre of your hopes, and the consummation of your wishes. An ordinary mechanic devotes more of his time to the labour of his hands than to any other concern; but it is not his laborious employment that interests his heart: it is his desire of procuring subsistence, and of warding off the inconveniences of poverty and want.

Finally, brethren, let each of us examine ourselves whether we be in the faith or not; let us not shrink from the severest test to which conscience and the word of God can put us. If we be, indeed, found sincere, after thus

searching our hearts, our faith will grow more firm, and our consolations more steady; or, if it appear that we have been hitherto deceiving and deceived, (awful idea!) we shall at least have an opportunity of once more lifting up our eyes for mercy, and of reading our danger in our sin, not in our punishment. *But we hope better things of you, brethren, and things which accompany salvation.* We hope that you have fled *from the wrath to come*, and have *laid hold on eternal life;* and we rejoice in the prospect of meeting you in a much larger assembly, at the great day, when you shall have washed your robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Then, *brought out of much tribulation*, and *redeemed from every nation, and tongue, and people*, his elect shall be gathered, he shall give up the kingdom to his God, and God shall be all in all. Alas! the voice of individual praise is weak and feeble; but how will our hearts swell with adoration and delight, when, while we are praising him, he shall receive from millions of beings, and millions of worlds, the same incense!

ON THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

THE

CIRCULAR LETTER

FROM THE

MINISTERS AND MESSENGERS OF THE SEVERAL BAPTIST CHURCHES

OF THE

Northamptonshire Association.

[WRITTEN IN 1809.]

ON THE

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE subject to which we would invite your attention on the present occasion, is *the Influence of the Spirit;* which it is not our design to discuss in a doctrinal manner, (taking it for granted you are already established in the belief of a divine agency on the soul, and have a competent acquaintance with its nature and effects,) but rather with a view to assist you in making a suitable improvement of what you already acknowledge and believe. Assuming it on the ground of revelation for an undoubted fact, that there is an operation of the Holy Ghost, to which the regeneration and growth in holiness of every Christian is to be primarily imputed, and that without it nothing can be done or attained to any important purpose in religion; we request your candid attention to a few hints respecting the most likely method of securing and perpetuating that blessed influence. To this we are the more encouraged, by remarking the numerous cautions, warnings, and advices, with which the mention of this subject is joined in the sacred writings; sufficient to show that the doctrine of which it treats is a practical doctrine, not designed to supersede the use of means, or the exercise of our rational powers; but rather to stimulate us to exertion, and teach us how to exert them aright. *If ye live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, by which ye are sealed to the day of redemption.*

The Spirit, we must remember, is a most free agent, and though he will not utterly forsake the work of his hands, he may be expected to withdraw himself, in a great measure, on being slighted, neglected, or opposed; and as our holiness and comfort depend entirely upon him, it is important for us to know, what deportment is calculated to invite, and what to repel his presence.

1. If we would wish for much of the presence of God by his Spirit, we must learn to set a high value upon it. The first communication of spiritual influence, is, indeed, imparted without this requisite; for it cannot be possessed in any adequate degree except by those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. *I am found of them that sought me not.* But in subsequent donations, the Lord seems very much to regulate his conduct by a rule, that of bestowing his richest favours where he knows they are most coveted, and will be most prized. The principle whence divine communications flow, is free, unmerited benignity; but in the mode of dispensing its fruits, it is worthy of the supreme Ruler to consult his majesty, by withholding a copious supply, till he has excited in the heart a profound estimation of his gifts.

No words are adequate to express the excellence and dignity of the gift of the divine Spirit. While Solomon was dedicating the temple, his great soul appears to have been put into a rapture at the very idea, that he whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, should deign to dwell with man upon the earth. How much more should each of us be transported when he finds the idea realised, by his own heart having become the seat of the divine presence! There are two considerations drawn from scripture, which assist us in forming a conception of the magnitude of this blessing.

The first is, that it is the great promise of the Christian dispensation, and stands in nearly the same relation to us, that the coming of the Messiah did to pious Jews. They waited for the consolation of Israel in the birth of Christ; and now that event is past, we are waiting in a similar manner, for the promise of the Spirit, of which the church has hitherto enjoyed but the first fruits. To

this, the Saviour, after his resurrection, pointed the expectation of his apostles, as emphatically the promise of the Father, which they were to receive at the distance of a few days; and when it was accomplished at the day of Pentecost, we find Peter insisting on it as the most illustrious proof of his ascension, as well as the chief fruit that converts were to reap from their repentance and baptism. *Repent and be baptized*, said he, *every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise* (that is, the promise of the Spirit) *is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call.* The apostle Paul places it in a similar light when he tells us, *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles:* and in what that blessing consists, he informs us, by adding, *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.* On this account, probably, he is styled the *Spirit of promise*, that is, *the Spirit so often promised;* in the communication of whom, the promises of God so centre, that it may be considered as the sum and substance of all the promises.

Another consideration, which evinces the supreme importance of this gift, is, that, in the esteem of our Lord, it was more than a compensation to his disciples, for the loss of his bodily presence; so much superior to it, that he tells them, it was expedient he should leave them in order to make way for it. *If I go not away, the Spirit will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* Great as the advantages were they derived from his society, they yet remained in a state of minority; their views were contracted, their hearts full of earthly adhesions, and a degree of carnality and prejudice attended them, which it was the office of the Spirit only to remove. From his more ample and effectual teaching, a great increase of knowledge was to accrue, to qualify them for their work of bearing witness to Christ, and a powerful energy to go forth, which was to render their ministry, though in themselves so much inferior, far more success-

ful than the personal ministry of our Lord. In consequence of his agency, the apostles were to become enlightened and intrepid, and the world convinced. *I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now But when the Spirit of truth is come, he will lead you into all truth. He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement.* Accordingly, after his descent, we find the apostles strangely transformed: an unction, a fervour, a boldness, marked their character, to which they had hitherto been strangers; and such conviction attended their preaching, that in a short time a great part of the world sunk under the weapons of their holy warfare. Nor is there any pretence for alleging, that this communication was confined to miraculous gifts, since it is asserted to be that Spirit which should abide in them for ever, and by which the church should be distinguished from the world. He is styled, *the Spirit of truth, whom the world could not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but*, it is added, *ye know him, for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you.*

As we are indebted to the Spirit for the first formation of the divine life, so it is he who alone can maintain it, and render it strong and vigorous. It is his office to actuate the habits of grace where they are already planted; to hold our souls in life, and to *strengthen us that we may walk up and down in the name of the Lord.* It is his office to present the mysteries of salvation; the truths which relate to the mediation of Christ and the riches of his grace, in so penetrating and transforming a manner, as to render them vital, operating principles, the food and the solace of our spirits. Without his agency, however intrinsically excellent, they will to us be mere dead speculation, an inert mass: it is only when they are animated by his breath, that they become spirit and life.

It is his office to afford that anointing, by which we may know all things; not only by a light which is merely directive to the understanding, but which so shines upon the heart, as to give a relish of the sweetness of divine truth, and effectually produce a compliance with its dictates. It belongs to him *to seal us to the day of redemp-*

tion; to put that mark and character upon us, which distinguishes the children of God, as well as to afford a foretaste and an earnest of the future inheritance. *And hereby*, saith an apostle, *we know that we are of God, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* It is his office to subdue the corruption of our nature, not by leaving us inactive spectators of the combat, but by engaging us to a determined resistance to every sinful propensity, by teaching our hands to war, and our fingers to fight, so that the victory shall be ours, and the praise his. *To help the infirmities of saints, who know not what to pray for as they ought, by making intercession for them with groanings which cannot be uttered*, is an important branch of his office. He kindles their desires, gives them a glimpse of the fulness of God, that all-comprehending good; and by exciting a relish of the beauties of holiness, and the ineffable pleasure which springs from nearness to God, disposes them to the fervent and effectual prayer which availeth much. In short, as Christ is the way to the Father, so it is equally certain, that the Spirit is the fountain of all the light and strength which enable us to walk in that way. Lest it should be suspected that in ascribing so much to the agency of the Spirit, we diminish the obligations we owe to the Redeemer, it may not be improper to remark, that the tendency of what we have advanced, rightly understood, will be just the contrary, since the Scriptures constantly remind us, that the gift of the Holy Ghost is the fruit of his mediation, and the purchase of his death. It was his interposing as *Emmanuel, God with us*, to repair the breach betwixt man and God, that prevailed upon the Father to communicate the Spirit to such as believe on him, and to intrust the whole agency of it to his hands. As the reward of his sufferings, he ascended on high, and received gifts for men; of which, the right of bestowing the Spirit is the principal, that the Lord God might dwell among them. The donation, in every instance, through the successive periods of the church, looks back to the death of the Redeemer, as the root and principle whence it takes its rise, and consequently is calculated to enlarge our conceptions

of his office and character, as the copiousness of the streams evinces the exuberance of the fountain. To him the Spirit was given above measure; in him it resides as in an inexhaustible spring, to be imparted in the dispensation of his gospel to every member of his mystical body, in pursuance of the purpose of his grace, and the ends of his death. It is *his* Spirit: hence we read of *the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus*, not only by reason of the essential union which subsists between the persons of the Godhead, but because the right of bestowing it was ascertained to him in the covenant of redemption.

2. If we would wish to enjoy much of the light and influence of the Spirit, we must seek it by fervent prayer. There are peculiar encouragements held out in the word of God to this purpose. *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* To illustrate the readiness of our heavenly Father to bestow this blessing, our Lord borrows a comparison from the instinct of parental affection, which prompts a parent to give with alacrity good things to his children. He will not merely supply his wants, which benevolence might prompt him to do with respect to a stranger, but he will do it with feelings peculiar to the parental relation, and will experience as much pleasure in conferring, as the child in receiving, his favours. It is thus with our heavenly Father: he delights in exercising kindness to his children, and especially in promoting their spiritual welfare. He gives not merely with the liberality of a prince, but with the heart of a father. It is worth remarking, that in relating the preceding discourse, while one evangelist makes express mention of the Spirit, another speaks only of good things, intimating that the communications of the Spirit comprehend whatever is good. Other things may, or may not, be ultimately beneficial: they are either of a doubtful nature in themselves, or are rendered so by the propensity our corruption gives us to abuse them. But the influence of the Spirit, by its efficacy in subduing that corruption, must be invariably beneficial; it is such an immediate emanation from God the fountain of blessedness, that it can never fail of being

intrinsically, essentially, and eternally good. It is also deserving our attention, that the injunction of seeking it by prayer, is prefaced by a parable constructed on purpose to teach us the propriety of urging our suit with importunity. In imploring other gifts (which we are at liberty to do with submission), it is still a great point of duty to moderate our desires, and to be prepared for a disappointment; because, as we have already remarked, it is possible the things we are seeking, may neither conduce to the glory of God, nor to our ultimate benefit; for "who knoweth what is good for a man all the days of this his *vain life?*" But when we present our requests for a larger measure of his grace, we labour under no such uncertainty, we may safely let forth all the ardour and vehemence of our spirits, since our desires are fixed upon what is the very knot and juncture, where the honour ot God and the interests of his creatures are indissolubly united. Desires after grace are, in fact, desires after God; and how is it possible they can be too vehement or intense, when directed to such an object? His gracious presence is not like the limited goods of this life, fitted to a particular crisis, or adapted to a special exigency in a fluctuating scene of things: it is alike suited to all times and seasons, the food of souls, the proper good of man, under every aspect of providence, and even the exchange of worlds. *My soul*, said David, *panteth after God, yea, for the living God. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.* The most eminent effusions of the Spirit we read of in scripture, were not only afforded to prayer, but appear to have taken place at the very time that exercise was performed. The descent of the Holy Ghost, at the day of Pentecost, was while the disciples were with one accord in one place; and after the imprisonment of Peter and John, who being dismissed, went to their own company, *While they prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken with a mighty wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* When a new heart and a new spirit are promised in Ezekiel, it is added, *I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.*

3. Habitual dependence on divine influence is an important duty. This may be considered as opposed to two things; first, to depending on ourselves, to the neglect of divine agency; next, to despondency and distrust. When the Holy Spirit has condescended to take the conduct of souls, it is unquestionably great presumption to enter upon duty in the same manner as if no such assistance were needed, or to be expected; and the result will be as with Samson, who said, *I will go forth and shake myself, as in time past, while he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.* It is one thing to acknowledge a dependence on heavenly influence in speculation, and another thing so to realise and to feel it as to say from the heart, *I will go in the strength of the Lord God.* A mere assent to this proposition, that the Spirit must concur in the production of every good work, (an assent not easily withheld without rejecting the Scriptures,) falls very short of the practical homage due from feeble worms to so great an Agent; and a most solemn and explicit acknowledgment of entire dependence, may reasonably be expected. When you engage in prayer, or in any other duty, endeavour to enter upon it with a serious and deliberate recollection of your need of the Spirit. Let the consciousness of your weakness and insufficiency for every good work be a sentiment rendered familiar to your minds, and deeply impressed on your hearts.

But while we recommend this, there is another extreme against which we think it our duty to guard you, and that is, a disposition to despondency and distrust. We are most ready to acknowledge that the assistance you need is most free and gratuitous, neither given to our deservings, nor flowing from any natural connexion subsisting betwixt our endeavours and the exertion of divine agency. The Spirit of God is a free Spirit; and it is impossible to conceive how either faith or prayer should have an intrinsic efficacy in drawing down influence from heaven. There is, however, a connexion established by divine vouchsafement, which entitles believers to expect, in the use of means, such measures

of gracious assistance as are requisite to sustain and support them in their religious course. The Spirit is spoken of as the matter of promise to which every christian is encouraged to look: *the promise is to you and to your children, and to as many as the Lord your God shall call.* Agreeable to this, it is represented as the express purpose of Christ's becoming a curse for us, that the *promise of the Spirit might come on the Gentiles through faith.* The same expectation is justified by the Saviour's own declaration, when on the last and great day of the feast he stood and cried, *Whoever is athirst, let him come unto me and drink; for he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This*, says the evangelist, *he spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.*

The readiness of the Holy Ghost to communicate himself to true believers, is also evinced by the tenour of evangelical precepts: *be ye strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* To command a person to be strong seems strange and unusual language, but is sufficiently explained when we reflect that a portion of spiritual power is ready to be communicated to those who duly seek it: *be ye filled with the Spirit*, which is the exhortation of the same apostle, takes it for granted that a copious supply is at hand, sufficient to satiate the desires of the saints. We are at a loss to account for such precepts, without supposing an established connexion betwixt the condition of believers and the further communication of divine influence. To the same purpose Paul speaks with apostolic authority, *this I say, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;* and Jude inculcates the duty of praying in the Spirit, which would be strange if no assistance were to be obtained; and as prayer is a duty of daily occurrence, the injunction implies that it is ready to be imparted to christians, not by fits and starts, or at distant intervals, but in a stated, regular course.

For this reason, when we hear christians complaining of the habitual withdrawment of the divine presence, we are under the necessity of ascribing it to their own

fault: not that we mean to deny there is much of sovereignty in this affair, or that *the Spirit, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth.* But it should be remembered, we are now adverting to the situation of real believers, who are entitled to the promise; and though it is probable there is much of sovereignty exercised even with respect to *them,* we apprehend it rather concerns those influences which are consolatory, than such as are sanctifying; though there is a degree of satisfaction intermingled with every exercise of genuine piety, yet it is manifest some influences of the Spirit tend more immediately to comfort, others to purification. By some we are engaged in the fixed contemplation of objects which exist out of ourselves, the perfections of God, the excellency of Christ, the admirable constitution of the gospel, accompanied with a delightful conviction of a personal interest in whatever comes under our view; the natural fruit of which is *joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* By others, we are more immediately impressed with a lasting sense of our extreme unworthiness, and made to mourn over remaining corruption, and the criminal defects inherent in our best services.

In the midst of such exercises, it is possible hope may languish, and comfort be reduced to a low ebb, yet the divine life may be still advancing, and the soul growing in humility, deadness to the world, and the mortification of her own will, as the sap during winter retires to the root of the plant, ready to ascend and produce verdure and beauty on the return of spring. *This is the will of God, even our sanctification;* and though he delights in comforting his people at proper seasons, he is much less intent on this than in promoting their spiritual improvement, to which, in this their probationary state, every thing is made subservient. Let us not then confound the decay of consolation with the decay of piety, nor imagine we can want the aids necessary to prevent the latter, unless we have forfeited them by presumption, negligence, and sloth. Whenever christians sensibly decline in religion, they ought to charge themselves with the guilt of having grieved the Spirit; they should take the alarm, *repent and do their first works;* they are

suffering under the rebukes of that paternal justice which God exercises in his own family. Such a measure of gracious assistance in the use of means, being by the tenour of the new covenant *ascertained* to real christians, as is requisite for their comfortable walk with God, to find it withheld should engage them in deep searchings of heart; and make them fear lest *a promise being left them of entering into rest, they should appear to come short of it.* But this leads us to observe, in the last place, that

4. If we wish to enjoy the light of the Spirit, we must take care to maintain a deportment suited to the character of that divine agent. When the apostle exhorts us not to *grieve the Spirit of God, by which we are sealed to the day of redemption*, it is forcibly implied that he is susceptible of offence, and that to offend him involves heinous ingratitude and folly: ingratitude, for what a requital is this for being sealed to the day of redemption! and folly, inasmuch as we may fitly say on this, as Paul did on a different occasion, *Who is he that maketh us glad, but the same that is made sorry by us?* Have we any other comforter when he is withdrawn? Is there a single ray of light can visit us in his absence, or can we be safe for a moment without his guidance and support? If the immense and infinite Spirit, by a mysterious condescension, deigns to undertake the conduct of a worm, ought it not to yield the most implicit submission? The appropriate duty owing to a faithful and experienced guide is a ready compliance with his dictates; and how much more may this be expected, when the disparity betwixt the parties in question is no less than infinite? The language of the Holy Ghost, in describing the manners of the ancient Israelites, is awfully monitory to professors of religion in every age; *they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit, therefore he turned to be their enemy, and fought against them.* As we wish to avoid whatever is more curious than useful, we shall not stay to inquire precisely on what occasions, or to what extent, the Spirit is capable of being resisted: it may be sufficient to observe, it is evident from melancholy experience, that it is very possible to neglect what

is the obvious tendency of his motions, which is invariably to produce universal holiness. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, meekness, gentleness, temperance, faith:* whatever is contrary to these involves an opposition to the Spirit, and is directly calculated to quench his sacred influence.

From his descending on Christ in the form of a dove, as well as from many express declarations of scripture, we may with certainty conclude the indulgence of all the irascible and malignant passions to be peculiarly repugnant to his nature; and it is remarkable, that the injunction of not grieving the Holy Spirit is immediately followed by a particular caution against cherishing such dispositions: *let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* Have you not found by experience, that the indulgence of the former has destroyed that self-recollection and composure which are so essential to devotion? Vindictive passions surround the soul with a sort of turbulent atmosphere, than which nothing can be conceived more opposite to that calm and holy light in which the blessed Spirit loves to dwell. The indulgence of sensual lusts, or of whatever enslaves the soul to the appetites of the body, in violation of the rules of sobriety and chastity, it seems almost unnecessary to add, must have a direct tendency to quench his sacred influences; wherever such desires prevail they war against the soul, immerse it in carnality, and utterly indispose it to every thing spiritual and heavenly. *That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;* it bears a resemblance to its author in being a spiritual production, which requires to be nourished by divine meditation, by pure and holy thoughts.

If you wish to live in the fellowship of the Spirit, you must guard with no less care against the encroachments of worldly-mindedness; recollecting we are christians just as far as our treasures and our hearts are placed in heaven, and no farther. A heart overcharged with the cares of this world, is as disqualified for converse with

God, and for walking in the Spirit, as by surfeiting and drunkenness; to which, by their tendency to intoxicate and stupify, they bear a great resemblance.

How many, by an immoderate attachment to wealth, and by being determined at all events to become rich, *have fallen into divers foolish and hurtful lusts, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows!* and where the result has not been so signally disastrous, a visible languor in religion has ensued, the friendship of serious christians been shunned, and the public ordinances of religion attended with little fruit or advantage. As it is the design of the Spirit, in his sacred visitations, to form us for an habitual converse with spiritual and eternal objects, nothing can tend more directly to contract it, than to bury our souls in earth: it is as impossible for the eye of the mind, as for that of the body, to look opposite ways at once; nor can we aim at *the things which are seen and temporal*, but by losing sight of those *which are unseen and eternal.*

But though a general attention to the duties of piety and virtue, and careful avoidance of the sins opposed to these, is certainly included in a becoming deportment to the Holy Spirit, perhaps it is not *all* that is included. The children of God are characterized in scripture by their being *led by the Spirit: led*, evidently not impelled, not driven forward in a headlong course, without choice or design; but being, by the constitution of their nature, rational and intelligent, and, by the influence of grace, rendered spiritual, they are disposed to obey at a touch, and to comply with the gentler insinuations of divine grace; they are ready to take that precise impression which corresponds with the mind and purpose of the Spirit. You are aware of what consequence it is in worldly concerns to embrace opportunities, and to improve critical seasons; and thus, in the things of the Spirit, there are times peculiarly favourable, moments of happy visitation, where much more may be done towards the advancement of our spiritual interest than usual. These are gales of the Spirit, unexpected influences of light and of power, which no assiduity in the means of

grace can command, but which it is a great point of wisdom to improve. If the husbandman is attentive to the vicissitudes of weather, and the face of the sky, that he may be prepared to take the full benefit of every gleam of sunshine, and every falling shower, how much more alert and attentive should we be in watching for those influences from above which are necessary to ripen and mature a far more precious crop! As the natural consequence of being long under the guidance of another is a quick perception of his meaning, so that we can meet his wishes before they are verbally expressed, something of this ready discernment, accompanied with instant compliance, may reasonably be expected from those who profess to be habitually led by the Spirit.

The design of his operation is in one view invariably the same, the production of holiness; but the branches of which that consists, and the exercises of mind which are rendered subservient to it, are various; and he who is intent on walking in the Spirit will be careful to fall in with that train of thought, and cherish that cast of reflection, to which he is especially invited. For want of more docility in this respect it is probable we have often sustained loss. Permit us here to suggest two or three heads of inquiry. You have sometimes felt a peculiar seriousness of mind; the delusive glare of worldly objects has faded away, or become dim before your eyes, and death and eternity appearing at the door, have filled the whole field of vision. Have you improved such seasons for fixing those maxims, and establishing those practical conclusions, which may produce an habitual sobriety of mind, when things appear under a different aspect? You have sometimes found, instead of a reluctance to pray, a powerful impulse to that exercise, so that you felt as if you could do nothing else. Have you always complied with these motions, and suffered nothing but the claims of absolute necessity to divert you from pouring out your hearts at the throne of grace? The Spirit is said to make intercession for saints, with groanings which cannot be uttered. When you have felt those ineffable longings after God, have you indulged

them to the utmost? Have you stretched every sail, launched forth into the deep of the divine perfections and promises, and possessed yourselves as much as possible of the fulness of God? There are moments when the conscience of a good man is more tender, has a nicer and more discriminating touch than usual; the evil of sin in general, and of his own in particular, appears in a more pure and piercing light. Have you availed yourselves of such seasons as these for searching into the chambers of imagery, and, while you detected greater and greater abominations, been at pains to bring them out, and slay them before the Lord? Have such visitations effected something towards the mortification of sin; or have they been suffered to expire in mere ineffectual resolutions? The fruits which godly sorrow produced in the Corinthians were thus beautifully portrayed; *What carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what revenge.* There are moments in the experience of a good man, when he feels a more than ordinary softness of mind; the frost of selfishness dissolves, and his heart flows forth in love to God and his fellow-creatures. How careful should we be to cherish such a frame, and to embrace the opportunity of subduing resentments, and of healing those sore wounds which it is scarcely possible to avoid in passing through this unquiet world.

There is a holy skill in turning the several parts of christian experience to account, analogous to what the votaries of the world display in the improvement of every conjuncture from which it is possible to derive any emolument; and though the end they propose is mean and contemptible, the steadiness with which they pursue it, and their dexterity in the choice of means, deserve imitation. In these respects *they are wiser in their generation than the children of light.*

Do not allow yourselves to indulge in religious sloth, or to give way to the solicitations of the tempter, from a confidence in the safety of your state, or in your spiritual immunities as christians. ' The habitual prevalence of such a disposition will afford a much stronger proof of

insincerity than any arguments which can be adduced for the contrary; and admitting your pretensions to piety to be ever so valid, a little reflection may convince you that a careless and negligent course will lay you open to the severest rebukes. *You only have I known* (says the Lord by the Prophet), *among all the families of the earth, therefore will I visit you for all your iniquities.*

Remember, dear brethren, we profess a peculiar relation to God as his children, his witnesses, his people, his temple; the character of that glorious Being, and of his religion, will be contemplated by the world, chiefly through the medium of our spirit and conduct, which ought to display, as in a mirror, the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. It is strictly appropriate to the subject of our present meditations, to remind you that you are temples. *For ye*, says the apostle, *are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* What purity, sanctity, and dignity may be expected in persons who bear such a character! A christian should look upon himself as something sacred and devoted, so that what involves but an ordinary degree of criminality in others, in him partakes of the nature of sacrilege; what is a breach of trust in others, is in him the profanation of a temple. Let us, dear brethren, watch and pray that nothing may be allowed a place in our hearts, that is not suitable to the residence of the holy and blessed God. Finally, *having such great and precious promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.*

* Having thus endeavoured to lay before you the most likely methods of obtaining the communications of the Spirit, as well as to show the great importance of this

* When Mr. Hall consented to the publication of this Circular Letter as a Tract, he annexed a few sentences of pointed application. These escaped the notice of the Editor, in the first edition, but are now subjoined.

gift, we might now dismiss the subject, were we not desirous of first guarding you against a dangerous mistake. The mistake to which we refer, is that of taking conviction for conversion, certain impressions of the guilt and danger of sin made upon the conscience, for the saving operations of the Spirit. These convictions are important: it is highly desirable and necessary to have a settled persuasion of the established connexion betwixt sin and punishment, and as a natural consequence to feel uneasiness and alarm, in proportion as we have reason to believe our sins are yet unpardoned. Until we see ourselves *lost*, we shall never truly come to Christ for salvation. Until we feel our malady, and dread its consequences, we shall never have recourse to the Physician, or be willing to comply with his prescription. We adjure you, therefore, as you value your eternal interests, not to trifle with convictions, or to endeavour to wear off religious concern and uneasiness, by the vanities of life, and the stupefactions of pleasure. Regard and cherish them as the sacred visitations of heaven; look upon them as mercifully designed to rouse and awaken you from a fatal stupor. They are often the harbingers of mercy.

Wherever the Spirit of God is in reality, he will convince of sin; but conviction is produced in thousands who still remain destitute of saving grace.—That influence of the Spirit by which a *change of heart* is effected, is essentially different from the distress and alarm which may be resolved into the exercise of mere natural conscience. For a man to be convinced that he is a sinner, and to tremble at the apprehension of wrath to come, is certainly something very distinct from becoming a new creature. Real christians have not only perceived their danger, but have fled for refuge; have not only been less or more troubled with a sense of guilt, but, in consequence of coming to Christ, have found rest for their souls. On a review of your past life, you perceive innumerable transgressions, it may be, and are perfectly convinced that you have been "walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the

children of disobedience." So far it is well: your apprehensions are just, and well founded; and your situation more replete with danger than you have ever conceived it to be. Do not however rest here. Let the views you entertain excite you the more earnestly to press into the kingdom of God. Let them engage you to a more diligent use of the means of grace, and, above all, let them lead you to fix your hope and trust on the Redeemer, whose blood alone can cleanse you from all sin, and whose intercession is able to save "to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Heb. vii. 25. Apply to him with humble faith and ardent prayer, and though you may be tempted to cherish doubts of the extent of his power and grace, say with him of old, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." Lay aside, as far as possible, every other concern; postpone your attention to every other object, till you have reason to believe you have obtained mercy, and are renewed in the spirit of your mind. Address the throne of grace with increasing importunity, remembering who hath said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." In all your addresses to God, make use of the name and intercession of Christ, plead the efficacy of his blood, and the encouragement he hath afforded sinners in his gospel to return to God. Keep a continual watch over your words, thoughts, and actions: keep your heart with all diligence. Guard, with the utmost care, against levity and sloth, two of the most dangerous snares that can entangle the souls of men.

If you ask how you may know whether you are partakers of the special grace of God? we reply, This will be best ascertained by its fruits. When you feel a fiixed hatred of sin, an intense thirst after holiness and perfection, and a delight in the word and ways .of God, when you are habitually disposed to dwell on the thoughts of Christ and heaven, when the Saviour appears unspeakably precious, as the pearl of great price, and you are habitually ready to part with every thing for his sake, you may be certain that you are born of God. These

are the fruits of the Spirit, which sufficiently demonstrate the influence and presence of that blessed Agent. Till you have experienced effects of this kind, you are in a wretched state, though surrounded with all the brightest earthly prospects, because you are estranged from God, and exposed to his eternal wrath and displeasure.

ON HEARING THE WORD:

THE

CIRCULAR LETTER

FROM THE

MINISTERS AND MESSENGERS OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES

OF THE

Northamptonshire Association.

[WRITTEN IN 1813.]

ON HEARING THE WORD.

Dear Brethren,

The subject on which we addressed you, at our last anniversary, was the proper method of Reading the Word of God; as a natural sequel to which, we beg leave, on the present occasion, to suggest a few hints of advice respecting the duty of Hearing it.

Preaching is an ordinance of God not entirely confined to the christian dispensation. From the Old Testament history, it appears that Ezra, upon the return of the Jews from Babylon, assembled them in the streets of Jerusalem, and ascending a stage, or pulpit, for the advantage of being better seen and heard, read the law in the ears of the people, and *gave the interpretation thereof.* It is probable that he did little more than, agreeable to the natural import of the phrase *interpretation*, translate, paragraph by paragraph, the Hebrew original into the Syriac, or Chaldee, which had become, during a captivity of forty years, the vernacular language of the Jews. From that time, however, synagogues were erected in all the cities throughout Judea, and regular officers appointed to read, first the Pentateuch, and, after the persecution by Antiochus, the Prophets, and explain them in ample paraphrases or comments. Such was the origin of preaching.

When the fulness of time was come for God, in his infinite mercy, to send forth his Son, his appearance was first announced by John's proclaiming in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord;* which, after a short time, was succeeded by the personal ministry of Christ and his apostles, with whom the dispensation of the gospel, properly speaking, commenced. After his resur-

rection, our Lord extended the commission of the apostles to all nations, saying, *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;* or, as you have it in Mark, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Upon the formation of christian churches, an order of men was appointed in each society for the express purpose of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments: wherein the wisdom and kindness of the Great Head of the church is eminently conspicuous; for such are the necessary avocations of life, so little leisure most christians possess for the acquisition of knowledge, and such the deficiency of many in the elementary parts of education, that they will always, under God, be chiefly indebted to this appointment for any extensive acquaintance with divine truth. The privilege of *reading* the Scriptures in our native language is of inestimable value; but, were it much more universal than it is, it would not supersede the necessity of hearing the Word: for there are not only difficulties in the Bible which require to be elucidated, and seeming contradictions to be solved, but the living voice of a preacher is admirably adapted to awaken attention, and to excite an interest, as well as to apply the general truths of revelation to the various cases of christian experience, and the regulation of human conduct. When an important subject is presented to an audience, with an ample illustration of its several parts, its practical improvement enforced, and its relation to the conscience and the heart insisted upon with seriousness, copiousness, and fervour, it is adapted, in the nature of things, to produce a more deep and lasting impression than can usually be expected from reading. He who knows *how forcible are right words*, and how apt man is to be moved by man, has consulted the constitution of our frame, by appointing an order of men, whose office it is to address their fellow-creatures on their eternal concerns. Strong feeling is naturally contagious; and if, as the Wise Man observes, *as iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend;* the combined effect of countenance, gesture, and voice, accom-

panying a powerful appeal to the understanding and the heart, on subjects of everlasting moment, can scarcely fail of being great.

But, independently of the natural tendency of the christian ministry to promote spiritual improvement, it derives a peculiar efficacy from its being a divine appointment. It is not merely a natural, it is also an *instituted* means of good; and whatever God appoints, by special authority, he graciously engages to bless, provided it be attended to with right dispositions, and from right motives. The means of grace are, as the words import, the consecrated channels in which his spiritual mercies flow; and, as the communication of spiritual blessings always implies an exertion of divine power, so these become the stated instrument, or occasion of its exercise. These are emphatically his ways, in which he is wont to walk with his people. *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.** Though the Spirit bloweth wheie it listeth, where the gospel is not preached the effects of his operation are rarely to be discerned, and we witness few or no indications of a renewed character out of the bounds of Christendom. From the history of religion, in all ages, it appears that the Spirit is accustomed to follow in the footsteps of his revealed Word; and that, wherever his work lies, he prepares his way by first communicating the Oracles of God. When he proposed to take out a people for his name from among the Gentiles, the first step he took was to commission the apostles to preach the gospel to every creature. To this St. Paul most solemnly directs our attention, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, as the grand instrument of human salvation:—*When, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased him, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.* So intimate by divine appointment, is the connexion betwixt the salvation of man and the ministry of the Word, that the method of salvation, under the gospel, derives from the latter its distinguishing appellation, being denominated the *hearing of*

* Isaiah lxiv. 5.

faith. St. Jude, in like manner, asserts it to be the instrumental cause of our regeneration. *Of his own will begat he us, by the Word of Truth.* And to the same purpose St. Peter reminds the christians, whom he was addressing, *that they were born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God; which word*, he adds, *is by the gospel preached unto you.* The *written* Word, we are told, indeed, from the highest authority, is able to make us wise unto salvation, and many pleasing instances of its saving efficacy might be produced to confirm this position; but, as the gospel was preached before it was penned, it is certain that most of the passages which speak on this subject are to be referred to its public ministry, and that, in subsequent ages, God has put a distinguishing honour upon it, by employing it as the principal means of accomplishing his saving purposes. There is every reason to suppose that the far greater part of those who have been truly sanctified and enlightened, will ascribe the change they have experienced principally to the *hearing of faith.*

What a powerful motive results from thence to take heed how we hear! If we feel any concern for a share in the great salvation, how careful should we be not to neglect the principal means of obtaining it! If there be a class from whom the spiritual beauty and glory of the gospel remain concealed, it consists of a description of persons the very mention of whom ought to make us tremble. *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.* Let no man allow himself to neglect the hearing of the Word, or hear it in a careless or irreverent manner, under the pretence of his having an opportunity of reading it in private; since the public ministry possesses, with respect to its tendency to excite the attention and interest the heart, many unquestionable advantages. Besides, such a pretence will generally be found to be hollow and disingenuous. If you observe a person habitually inattentive under an awakening, searching ministry, follow him into his retirement, and, it may be confidently predicted, you will seldom see the Bible in his hands; or, if he overcome his aversion to religion so

far as occasionally to peruse a chapter, it will be in the same spirit in which he hears: he will satisfy himself with having completed his task, *and straightway go his way and forget what manner of man he was.* If the general course of the world were as favourable to religion as it is the contrary; if an intercourse with mankind were a school of piety; the state of such persons would be less hopeless, and there would be a greater probability of their being gained without the Word: but while every thing around us conspires to render the mind earthly and sensual, and the world is continually moulding and transforming its votaries, the situation of such as attend the means of grace in a careless manner is unspeakably dangerous, since they are continually exposing themselves to influences which corrupt, while they render themselves inaccessible to such as are of a salutary operation. What can be expected but the death of that patient who takes a course which is continually inflaming his disease, while he despises and neglects the remedy? When we see men attentive under the ministry of the Word, and evidently anxious to comprehend its truths, we cannot but entertain hopes of their salvation; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." It is observed of the Jews at Berea, *that they were more noble than those of Thessalonica, because they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so;* and the result was such as might be expected—a great multitude of them believed. Candid and attentive hearers place themselves, so to speak, in the way of the Spirit: while those who cannot be prevailed upon to give it serious attention may most justly be said to *put the kingdom of God far from them, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.* To such the awful threatenings recorded in the Proverbs are most applicable:—*Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.* In such cases, the ministers of the gospel can do little more, than like Jeremiah, retire to *weep in secret places for their pride.*

But as we, who are assembled on the present occasion, consist of ministers and delegates from a number of associated churches, which we consider ourselves as addressing in these our circular epistles, we shall confine ourselves, in our subsequent remarks, to such heads of advice on the duty of hearing the Word, as are appropriate to the character of professing christians. We will consider ourselves as addressing such, and such only, as must be supposed, in a judgement of charity, to have an experimental acquaintance with divine truth.

First. Previous to your entering into the house of God, seek *a prepared heart*, and implore the blessing of God on the ministry of his Word. It may be presumed that no real christian will neglect to preface his attendance on social worship with secret prayer. But let the acquisition of a devout and serious frame, freed from the cares, vanities, and pollutions of the world, accompanied with earnest desires after God, and the communications of his grace, form a principal subject of your private devotions. Forget not to implore a blessing on the public ministry, that it may accomplish in yourselves, and to others, the great purposes it is designed to answer; and that those measures of assistance may be afforded to your ministers which shall replenish them with light, love, and liberty, that they may speak the mystery of the gospel as it ought to be spoken. Pastors and people would both derive eminent advantages from such a practice; they, in their capacity of exhibiting, you, in your preparation for receiving, the mysteries of the gospel. As the duties of the closet have the happiest tendency, by solemnizing and elevating the mind, to prepare for those of the sanctuary, so the conviction of your having borne your minister on your heart before the throne of grace would, apart from every other consideration, dispose him to address you with augmented zeal and tenderness. We should consider it as such a token for good, as well as such an unequivocal proof of your attachment, as would greatly animate and support us under all our discouragements.

Secondly. Establish in your minds the highest *reve-*

rence and esteem of the glorious gospel. Recollect the miracles wrought to confirm it; the sanction, the awful sanction, by which a due reception of it is enforced, and the infinite value of that blood by which its blessings were ratified and procured. Recollect that on its acceptance or rejection, on the effects which it produces on the heart and life, depends our state for eternity; since there is no other mean devised for our recovery, no other name given under heaven by which we can be saved, besides that which it exhibits. It is not merely the incorruptible seed of regeneration; it is also the mould in which our souls must be cast, agreeable to the apostle's beautiful metaphor:—*You have obeyed from the heart that form* (or mould) *of doctrine into which ye were delivered.* In order to our bearing the image of Christ, who is the firstborn among many brethren, it is necessary to receive its impress in every part; nor is there any thing in us what it ought to be, any thing truly excellent, but in proportion to its conformity to that pattern. Its operation is not to be confined to time or place; it is the very element in which the christian is appointed to live, and to receive continual accessions of spiritual strength and purity, until he is presented faultless in the presence of the divine glory. The more you esteem the gospel, the more will you be attached to that ministry in which its doctrines are developed, and its duties explained and inculcated; because, in the present state of the world, it is the chief, though not the only means, of possessing yourselves of its advantages. To tremble at God's Word is also mentioned as one of the most essential features in the character of him to whom God will look with approbation.

Thirdly. Hear the Word with *attention.* If you are convinced of the justice of the preceding remarks, nothing further is requisite to convince you of the propriety of this advice, since they all combine to enforce it. We would only remark, in general, that the knowledge derived from a discourse depends entirely upon attention, in exact proportion to which will be the pro-

gress made by a mind of a given capacity. Not to listen with attention is the same thing as to have ears which hear not, and eyes which see not. While you are hearing, whatever trains of thought of a foreign and extraneous nature obtrude themselves, should be resolutely repelled. In the power of fixing the attention, the most precious of the intellectual habits, mankind differ greatly; but every man possesses some, and it will increase the more it is exerted. He who exercises no discipline over himself in this respect, acquires such a volatility of mind, such a vagrancy of imagination, as dooms him to be the sport of every mental vanity: it is impossible such a man should attain to true wisdom. If we cultivate, on the contrary, a habit of attention, it will become natural, thought will strike its roots deep, and we shall, by degrees, experience no difficulty in following the track of the longest connected discourse. As we find it easy to attend to what interests the heart, and the thoughts naturally follow the course of the affections, the best antidote to habitual inattention to religious instruction is the love of the truth. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly," and to hear it attentively will be a pleasure, not a task.

The practice of sleeping in places of worship, a practice we believe not prevalent in any other places of public resort, is not only a gross violation of the advice we are giving, but most distressing to ministers, and most disgraceful to those who indulge it. If the apostle indignantly inquires of the Corinthians whether they had not houses to eat and drink in, may we not, with equal propriety, ask those who indulge in this practice, whether they have not beds to sleep in, that they convert the house of God into a dormitory? A little self-denial, a very gentle restraint on the appetite, would, in most cases, put a stop to this abomination; and with what propriety can he pretend to desire the sincere milk of the Word, who cannot be prevailed upon, one day out of seven, to refrain from the glutting which absolutely disqualifies him for receiving it?

Fourthly. Hear the Word of God with *impartiality.*

To be partial in the law was a crime formerly charged upon the Jewish priests; nor is it less sinful in the professors of christianity. There is a class of hearers who have their favourite topics, to which they are so immoderately attached, that they are offended if they are not brought forward on all occasions; while there are others, of at least equal importance, which they can seldom be prevailed upon to listen to with patience. Some are never pleased but with doctrinal statements; they are in raptures while the preacher is insisting on the doctrines of grace, and the privileges of God's people; but when he proceeds to inculcate the practical improvement of these doctrines, and the necessity of adorning the profession of them by the virtues of a holy life, their countenances fall, and they make no secret of their disgust. Others are all for practical preaching, while they have no relish for that truth which can alone sanctify the heart. But as it is a symptom of a diseased state of body to be able to relish only one sort of food, it is not less of the mind to have a taste for only one sort of instruction. It is difficult to suppose that such persons love the Word of God, as the Word of God; for, if they did, every part of it, in its due proportion, and its proper place, would be acceptable. It is possible, in consequence of the various exigencies of the christian life, that there may be seasons to which some views of divine truth may be peculiarly suited, and on that account heard with superior advantage and delight; but this is perfectly consistent with an impartial attachment to the whole of revelation. But to feel an habitual distaste to instruction, the most solid and scriptural, unless it be confined to a few favourite topics, is an infallible indication of a wrong state of mind. It is only by yielding the soul to the impression of every divine communication and discovery, that the several graces which enter into the composition of the new creature are nourished and sustained. As the perfection of the christian system results from the symmetry of its several parts, in which there is nothing redundant, nothing disproportioned, and nothing defective; so the beauty of the christian character consists in its exhibiting

an adequate impress and representation of the whole. If there be any particular branch of the Word of God to which we are habitually indisposed, we may generally conclude that is precisely the part which we most need; and, instead of indulging our distaste, we ought seriously to set ourselves to correct the mental disease which has given occasion to it.

In some instances, the partiality to certain views of truth, to the exclusion of others of which we are complaining, may arise, not so much from moral disorder, as from a deficiency of religious knowledge, and that contraction of mind which is its usual consequence. We would earnestly exhort persons of this description not to make themselves the standard, nor attempt to confine their ministers to the first principles of the Oracles of God. There are in most assemblies some who are capable of digesting strong meat, whose improvement ought to be consulted; and it behoves such as are not, instead of abridging the provisions of the family, to endeavour to enlarge their knowledge, and extend their inquiries. A christian minister is compared by our Lord to an householder, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.

Fifthly. Hear the Word with constant *self-application.* Hear not for others, but for yourselves. What should we think of a person who, after accepting an invitation to a feast, and taking his place at the table, instead of partaking of the repast, amused himself with speculating on the nature of the provisions, or the manner in which they were prepared, and their adaptation to the temperament of the several guests, without tasting a single article? Such, however, is the conduct of those who hear the Word without applying it to themselves, or considering the aspect it bears on their individual character. Go to the house of God with a serious expectation and desire of meeting with something suited to your particular state; something that shall lay the axe to the root of your corruptions; mortify your easily-besetting sin, and confirm the graces in which you are most deficient. A little attention will be sufficient to

give you that insight into your character which will teach what you need; what the peculiar temptations to which you are exposed, and on what account you feel most shame and humiliation before God. Every one may know, if he pleases, the *plague* of his own heart. Keep your eye upon it while you are hearing, and eagerly lay hold upon what is best adapted to heal and correct it. Remember that religion is a personal thing, an individual concern; for every one of us must give an account of *himself* to God, and every man bear his own burden. *Is not my word as a fire*, saith the Lord, *and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* If such be its power and efficacy, lay your hearts open to it, and expose them fully to the stroke of the hammer, and the action of the fire. Do not imagine, because you are tolerably well acquainted with the system of the gospel, that you have therefore nothing to learn; and that your only obligation to attend its ministry arises from the necessity of setting an example. It is probable your knowledge is much more limited than you suppose; but if it be not, it is a great mistake to imagine the only advantage derived from hearing is the acquisition of new truths. There is a spiritual perception, infinitely more important than the knowledge which is merely speculative. The latter is at most but a means to the former, and this perception is not confined to new propositions. It is frequently, nay, most frequently, attached to truths already known; and, when they are faithfully and affectionately exhibited, they are the principal means of calling into action, and strengthening the habits of internal grace. Love, joy, humility, heavenly-mindedness, godly sorrow for sin, and holy resolutions against it, are not promoted so much by novel speculations, as by placing in a just and affecting light the acknowledged truths of the gospel, and thereby stirring up the mind by way of remembrance. *Whilst I am in this tabernacle*, said Peter, *I will not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the present truth.* We appeal to the experience of every real christian, whether

the sweetest and most profitable seasons he has enjoyed have not been those in which he is conscious of having learned no new truth, strictly speaking, but was indulged with spiritual and transforming views of the plain, unquestionable discoveries of the gospel. As the Word of God is the food of souls, so it corresponds to that character in this respect among others—that the strength and refreshment it imparts depend not upon its novelty, but upon the nutritious properties it possesses. It is a sickly appetite only which craves incessant variety.

Sixthly. Hear with *candour.* The indulgence of a nice and fastidious taste is as adverse to the improvement of the hearer as it is to the comfort of the minister. Considering the variety of our avocations, the necessity we are under of addressing you in all states of mind, and sometimes on the most unexpected occasions, if we could not rely on your candour, our situation would be scarcely tolerable. Where the general tendency of a discourse is good, and the instruction delivered is weighty and solid, it is the part of candour to overlook imperfections in the composition, manner, or elocution of the speaker; imitating, in this respect, the example of the Galatians, of whom Paul testifies that they did not despise his temptation, which was in the flesh—some unhappy peculiarity in his speech or countenance, we may suppose, which exposed him to the derision of the unfeeling. The Lord, by the mouth of Isaiah, severely censures such as *make a man an offender for a word*, a fault too prevalent in many of our churches, especially among such as are the least informed and judicious; for the disposition to sit in judgement upon the orthodoxy of ministers is usually in an inverse proportion to the ability. Be not hasty in concluding that a preacher is erroneous because he may chance to use a word, or a phrase, not exactly suited to your taste and comprehension. It is very possible the idea it is intended to convey, may perfectly accord with your own sentiments; but, if it should not, it is equally possible the propriety of it may be vindicated by considerations with which you are not acquainted. *Be not many masters*, many teachers, saith St. James, *knowing*

ye shall receive the greater condemnation. Hear the word of God less in the spirit of judges than of those who shall be judged by it. If you are not conscious of your need of religious instruction, why elect pastors and teachers for that purpose? but, if ye are, how inconsistent is it to indulge that spirit of cavil and censure which can have no other effect than to deter your ministers from the faithful discharge of their office, from declaring the whole counsel of God! In most dissenting congregations, there are a few persons who value themselves on their skill in detecting the unsoundness of ministers; and who, when they hear a stranger, attend less with a view to spiritual improvement than to pass their verdict, which they expect shall be received as decisive. It is almost unnecessary to add, that they usually consist of the most ignorant, conceited, and irreligious part of the society. Such a disposition should, as much as possible, be discouraged and suppressed.

Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. Despise not men of plain talents, who preach the truth, and appear to have your eternal welfare at heart. If you choose to converse with your fellow-christians on what you have been hearing, a practice which, if rightly conducted, may be very edifying, let your conversation turn more upon the tendency, the spiritual beauty and glory, of those great things of God which have engaged your attention, than on the merit of the preacher. We may readily suppose that Cornelius and his friends, after hearing Peter, employed very few words in discussing the oratorical talents of that great apostle; any more than the three thousand, who at the day of Pentecost were pricked to the heart: their minds were too much occupied by the momentous truths they had been listening to, to leave room for such reflections. Yet this is the only kind of religious conversation (if it deserve the appellation) in which too many professors engage. "Give me (says the incomparable Fenelon) the preacher who imbues my mind with such a love of the Word of God, as makes me desirous of hearing it from any mouth."

When your ministers are exposing a particular vice, and endeavouring to deter from it by the motives which reason and revelation supply, guard against a suspicion of their being *personal.* That they ought not to be so we readily admit; that is, that they ought not to descend to such a minute specification of circumstances, as shall necessarily direct the attention to one or more individuals: but if they are not at liberty to point their arrows against particular vices among them, or are expected, lest they should wound, to make a courteous apology, by assuring the audience of their hope and conviction that none among them are implicated, they had better seal up their lips in perpetual silence. It is a most indispensable part of our office to warn sinners of every description; and, that we may "not beat the air," to attack particular sins, as well as sin in the abstract; and if, without our intending it, an individual suspects he is personally aimed at, he merely bears an involuntary testimony to our fidelity and skill.

Seventhly. Hear the Word with a sincere resolution of *obeying* it. *If ye know these things*, said our Lord, *happy are ye if ye do them.—He that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a man who built his house upon a rock.* To be a forgetful hearer of the Word, and not a doer, is to forfeit all the advantages of the Christian dispensation, which is imparted solely with a view to practice. The doctrine of faith is published with a design to produce the obedience of faith in all nations. The doctrine of repentance is nothing more or less than the command of God, that all men every where should repent. If we are reminded that *he who in times past spoke to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son*, it is that we may be admonished not to *refuse* him that speaketh. If we are taught the supreme dignity and exaltation of Christ as a Mediator, it is that *every knee may bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord.* If the apostles, having the mind of Christ, faithfully imparted it, it was that the same mind may be in us, to purify our passions, and regulate our conduct. We can scarcely imagine a greater imperti-

nence than to hear the Word with apparent seriousness, without intending to comply with its directions. It is a solemn mockery, concealing, under an air of reverence and submission, a determination to rebel, and, in the language of the prophet, a heart bent on backsliding. To suppose the Supreme Being pleased with such a mode of attendance, is to impute to him a conduct which it would be an insult to ascribe to a fellow-creature; for who, but the weakest of mortals, under the character of a master or a sovereign, would be gratified with the profound and respectful attention with which his commands were heard, while there existed a fixed resolution not to obey? Remember, dear brethren, the practical tendency of every Christian doctrine: remember that the ministry of the gospel is the appointed instrument of forming the spirits of men to faith and obedience; and that, consequently, the utmost attention and assiduity in hearing it is fruitless and unavailing, which fails to produce that effect.

Finally. Be careful, after you have heard the Word, to *retain and perpetuate its impressions.* Meditate, retire, and digest it in your thoughts; turn it into prayer; in a word, spare no pains to fasten it upon your hearts. You have read, dear brethren, of those *to whom the gospel was preached, as well as to us, but the Word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* Endeavour to exert upon it distinct and vigorous acts of faith, and thereby to mingle and incorporate it with all the powers of the mind, and all the springs of action. But this you can never accomplish without deep and serious reflection; for want of which it is too often left loose and exposed, like uncovered seed, which the fowls of heaven easily pick up and devour. *Then cometh that wicked one,* says our Lord, *and taketh it out of his heart, and he becometh unfruitful.* How many hearers, by engaging in worldly conversation, or giving way to a vain and unprofitable train of thought, when they leave the sanctuary, lose the impressions they had received, instead of conducting themselves like persons who have just been put in possession of a treasure which they are anxious to secure from depredation! If Satan watches for an oppor-

tunity of taking the Word out of our hearts, what remains but that we oppose vigilance to vigilance, and effort to effort? and since the prize contended for, by the powers of darkness, is our souls, what a melancholy reflection it will be, if the disinterested malice of our enemies renders them vigilant and active in seeking their destruction, while we are careless and negligent in seeking their salvation! Satan, conscious that the Word of God is capable of elevating us to that pinnacle of happiness whence he fell, contemplates its success with alarm, and spares no artifice or stratagem, which his capacious intellect can suggest, to obstruct its progress; and if we, by our criminal negligence, turn his ally against ourselves, we shall be guilty of that prodigy of folly and infatuation which is equally condemned by the councils of heaven and the machinations of hell.

END OF VOL. I.

J. Haddon, Castle Street, Finsbury